

Israel merchant killed in Gaza Strip

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israeli vegetable merchant was killed Tuesday when unknown assailants shot at his car in the occupied Gaza Strip, the army said. A second merchant in the car was lightly wounded. The shooting occurred around 7:30 p.m. (1730 GMT) in the beach area near the southern town of Khan Yunis, said the army official, speaking on condition of anonymity. The merchant was killed on the spot, and the wounded man ran to call for help, the official said. Troops were searching the area. The two men had entered an area that is off limits to Israeli civilians, the army official said. The army did not give the name of the slain man, saying only he was a Jewish resident of central Israel. The wounded merchant is an Israeli Arab, the army said.

Volume 17 Number 5230

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1993, SHA- 'BAN 18, 1413

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Tourist bus attacked in Egypt

ISSIUT (AP) — Unknown gunmen fired shots across a canal at a bus carrying 67 German tourists and its police car escort Tuesday, but nobody was hurt, police sources said. It was the fourth attack this year against tourists in Egypt and the second in almost the same place, near the southern town of Dairut where Islamic extremists killed a British tourist last year. None of the 1993 attacks have caused casualties, police sources said they believed Tuesday's gunmen also were Muslim extremists.

Sudanese parliament welcomes Pope

KHARTOUM, (AP) — Sudan's parliament Tuesday welcomed Pope John Paul II to Khartoum and said his visit would allow him to check alleged human rights abuses by the government. One day before the Pope's nine-hour stop over in Khartoum, the Transitional National Council issued a statement saying: "Our council welcomes his holiness as an advocate of international peace and religious tolerance and coexistence in the world." The Pope is on an eight-day African tour aimed at pressing for the protection of Christians, particularly in southern Sudan. In Kampala, Uganda Monday, the pontiff condemned the oppression of minority populations specially in Sudan. "I wish to raise my voice in support of peace and justice for all the Sudanese people, and to comfort my brothers and sisters in the faith," he said.

230 dead in Iranian floods

NICOSIA (AP) — At least 230 people have been killed and thousands forced to flee their homes by flooding in several Iranian provinces, Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Tuesday. In Bandar Abbas 225 people have been killed, a large number of homes and many acres of farmlands totally washed away, the agency said. It said five were reported killed in German province while in the northeastern Khorasan province more than 12,000 were evacuated after heavy rains cut off electricity lines, blocked roads and washed away many houses. Fifteen planes dispatched relief workers, food, tents, blankets, and clothing to the flood-stricken areas, the agency said.

France readying aid for Lebanon

PARIS (R) — The French government is putting together a package of aid for Lebanon reconstruction, a senior French finance ministry official said Tuesday. Christian Faget said Tuesday that the package, but he told a meeting of French and Lebanese business executives the protocol would cover loans and grants for various infrastructure projects, notably in water, electricity and telecommunications. He said that Coface, the French agency that provides export credit guarantees for the government, was willing to provide cover for commercial risks from its own funds, showing that confidence in Lebanon was now to a large extent restored. However, he said a dispute between France and Lebanon over some medium-term loans covered by Coface meant the agency would be reluctant to provide cover for Lebanese public sector firms.

Rebels claim killing 1,584 Turkish troops

NICOSIA (AP) — A total of 1,584 Turkish troops were killed by Kurdish separatist rebels in the course of 1992, a report by rebels said Tuesday. The report said rebel losses during the year stood at 946 dead and 150 injured. It accused the Turkish government of "an unprecedented cover-up of the truth" about the deaths, according to a statement by the district governor in Dec. 31, 1992, who admitted 467 troops and 133 civil guards killed during the year. The district governor's further quoted as giving the number of rebel attacks as 1,500, more than those claimed by the government. The rebels said the number of attacks given by the government was 200 more than the total of the previous year.



An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

U.S. begins Mideast campaign ahead of Christopher's visit

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States has launched a diplomatic effort to defuse the crisis over the 415 Palestinians expelled by Israel ahead of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle East mission next week. Senior U.S. State Department and White House officials met a delegation headed by Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi Monday and a group of Israeli officials headed by chief negotiator Eli Rubinstein was flying to Washington for talks Tuesday. "They are trying to clear the way so that Christopher's mission does not get totally bogged down in the deportee issue," said one source close to the talks. Israel expelled 415 Palestinians from the occupied territories on Dec. 17, charging them with membership in militant Islamic groups.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said last week he would allow 100 to return and cut the exile terms of the rest to a one-year maximum. The United States said the offer should clear the way for a resumption of peace talks but expellees, who are living in tents on a barren hillside in South Lebanon, rejected it. Dr. Ashrawi told reporters after her meetings with officials she had made it clear that Palestinians demanded the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 of Dec. 18, which demanded the immediate return of all expellees. "We are willing to look at implementation of 799 to ensure compliance through a timetable or deadline," she said. "But the Israeli-American agreement does not address the

issue of the illegality of the deportation and...so far it is not enough to get the peace process going," said Dr. Ashrawi. Now, Mr. Christopher has the problem of how to resume Arab-Israeli talks, which were suspended on the day the expulsions were announced. He leaves for the region on Feb. 17 and is expected to visit Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia during the following week. "We don't see eye to eye," Dr. Ashrawi said after meeting for two hours with Mr. Djerejian. Dr. Ashrawi said she would hold more talks with State Department officials later in the week. One topic, she said, would be the possibility of resuming U.S. dialogue with the Palestine

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Worst snow in eight weeks hit expellees

MARJ AL ZOHOUR, Lebanon (R) — The worst snowstorms hit nearly 400 Palestinians Tuesday since Israel dumped them in South Lebanon nearly eight weeks ago. Huddling in snow-covered tents on water-soaked bedding, the Palestinians shivered with cold and slammed the United Nations Security Council for failing to force Israel to take them back. "I just don't know why (U.N. Secretary General) Boutros Ghali is still silent and has not asked the Security Council to convene," said Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396 group. "Is he waiting to see our motionless bodies buried under all this snow?" said Dr. Rantisi. "What would the world say then?"

He said he believed U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, starting a Middle East tour on Feb. 17, would immediately force Israel to back down if he saw conditions at the makeshift camp. "I don't think any human being with a conscience could stand silent or sidestep us while we suffer under the snow and in the strongest of storms since we arrived here," he told journalists. Mr. Christopher, in his first foreign tour, will try to put back on track Middle East peace talks delayed by the crisis (see page 2). But diplomats say he will not visit the camp wedged on a hillside between Israeli and Lebanese lines. More than 10 centimetres of

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Afghans flee Kabul during lull in shelling

KABUL (R) — Kabul residents took advantage of a lull in one of the fiercest rocket bombardments of the Afghan capital Tuesday to flee the shell-shattered city where at least 54 people were killed a day earlier. Only a few rockets exploded in Kabul a day after fighters loyal to renegade Mujahideen chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar pounded the city with rocket fire, killing dozens and injuring hundreds. Kabul Radio put the casualty toll at 54 dead and 100 injured. Hospitals said the numbers were likely much higher. "These Mujahideen are taking us back to the first century," shouted one angry Kabul man as he pushed a cart loaded with possessions out of the city. Mr. Hekmatyar is fighting to unseat President Burhanuddin Rabbani, accusing the first

permanent head of state since the guerrillas took power from the Soviet-installed government last April of rigging his election last December (Mediation efforts, see page 2). One man, his face bleeding from shrapnel wounds, walked out of the city with a table strapped to his back while his son trudged beside him pushing a cartload of belongings. Residents said they held out little hope of a ceasefire and blamed both sides for the fighting. People fleeing the west where most fighting in the last three weeks has been concentrated reported increasing lawlessness, with numerous rapes and robberies. "Only the United Nations can save us," said a woman who joined a small demonstration.

Jordan, Kazakhstan to establish diplomatic relations

ALMA-ATA, Kazakhstan (Petra) — Jordan on Tuesday concluded an agreement to establish diplomatic relations between Jordan and the Republic of Kazakhstan. The agreement followed a meeting between a visiting Jordanian delegation headed by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid and Kazakh President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev to whom Prince Ra'ad conveyed a message from His Majesty King Hussein. Prince Ra'ad underlined the strong historic and cultural ties between the Muslim people of Jordan and Kazakhstan and expressed hope that bilateral cooperation in many fields could be developed. Mr. Nazarbayev said his country was keen to maintain the best and strongest possible relations and expanding scopes of cooperation in various fields with Jordan. Earlier, delegation member and Deputy Premier and Transport Minister Ali Suheimat met with the deputy prime minister of Kazakhstan and said Jordan was looking forward to further friendship and cooperation. The deputy premier of Kazakhstan paid tribute to King Hussein's role in Middle Eastern affairs and his drive to attain a just peace in the region and said Kazakhstan supported the King's endeavours in this respect. Mr. Suheimat said the King had instructed the delegation to open a dialogue with the leaders of the now independent Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union aimed at bolstering relations with them. Mr. Suheimat reaffirmed Jordan's solidarity with Kazakhstan in its drive to overcome the numerous challenges and looks forward to more support on the part of the Islamic republics for the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their rights and homeland. Jordan and Kazakhstan also set up joint committees to study areas where cooperation could be achieved. The Jordanian delegation is due to leave Alma-Ata Wednesday for Kyrgyzstan on the next leg of its tour.



VIOLENT PROTESTS: Masked Palestinian protesters taunt Israeli soldiers during clashes in the Shu'fat refugee camp in Arab East Jerusalem as violent demonstrations continue in the occupied territories after at least 10 Palestinians were shot and killed by Israeli soldiers in four days (AFP photo)

Sharif Zeid meets U.S. senators, says peace process under threat

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday met with U.S. senators Arlen Specter, Hank Brown and James Jeffords, who are currently on a visit to Jordan as part of a tour of the region. Sharif Zeid discussed with them the latest developments in the Middle East in the aftermath of Israel's expulsion of 400 Palestinians from their homeland and the implications of such a measure on the resumption of the Middle East peace process. Sharif Zeid stressed the need for implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the return of the expellees to their homeland. Sharif Zeid called for a uniform approach and standard towards implementation of all U.N. resolutions.

The prime minister called on the U.N. to ensure Israel's compliance with its resolutions and respect for the international community's will. Sharif Zeid and the three Republican senators also reviewed bilateral relations. Jordan, which seeks to establish good relations with all countries around the world, looks forward to an influential American role that takes into consideration the Palestine question being the crux of the Middle East conflict and Arab aspirations for ensuring a world dominated by justice, stability and peace, Sharif Zeid said. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and Minister of State for

Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izzeddine as well as American Ambassador Roger Harrison. Mr. Specter, 63, of Pennsylvania, Mr. Brown, 53, of Colorado, and Jeffords, 59, of Vermont are on a fact-finding mission to the region. They arrived here from Damascus and will start a visit to Israel Wednesday. A Jordanian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the AP the three senators and the premier also discussed international sanctions imposed on Iraq shortly after its Aug. 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait. "The premier explained to the American visitors the importance of alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people," the official said. He would not elaborate.

Fifth leftist party gets approval

By Saad Silawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Interior Tuesday licensed the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (JDPUP), bringing to 12 the number of political parties so far legalised by the government. The party's first secretary general, Azmi Al Khawaja, voiced appreciation to the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid and a ministerial committee formed to discuss requests by left-wing parties to officially form such parties for their encouraging response. Mr. Khawaja told a press conference that the party had sent an explanatory note about a number of issues touching upon the party's relation with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

The note said that party maintains a "struggle and coordination link" with the Damascus-based PFLP and stressed that it seeks to avoid duplication of membership in the two parties. The note also said that the JDPUP would be financed through contributions from members and donations, in addition to revenues coming from economic projects run by the party. Commenting on reports that the authorities had found firearms with founding members of the party, the note said the party was committed to "political and intellectual struggle" and that "such a struggle" does not imply the use of firearms. "We are against the use of firearms," Mr. Khawaja said.

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Aideed fails to turn up for meeting with U.S. military

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somalia's leading warlord, General Mohammad Farah Aideed, failed to attend planned talks with U.S. commanders Tuesday after American troops detained his top lieutenant for illegal arms possession. "For whatever reason he (Aideed) has decided not to turn up and has not said why," said Colonel Buck Bedard, commander of U.S. Marines in Somalia's capital Mogadishu. The talks were called by Gen. Aideed to discuss security issues and also to thank the American-led multinational force for establishing a school in Mogadishu. Col. Bedard told reporters after waiting in vain for the warlord for more than an hour. Gen. Aideed and his guerrillas take credit for the ousting of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and now want to play a bigger role in shaping the political future of Somalia, shattered by civil war that followed Mr. Siad Barre's toppling. Gen. Aideed's sub of the Americans followed the brief detention Monday of Omar Jess, a former army officer controlling several thousand militiamen who

is allied to Gen. Aideed, by U.S. forces at a military roadblock near Mogadishu. The U.S. military command said Col. Jess and 31 supporters were released after questioning over an assortment of weapons, including machineguns and rocket-propelled grenades, that was found in their two vehicles. Clashes last month between factions led by Col. Jess and Mohammad Said Hersi, known as Gen. Morgan, led to intervention by U.S. and Belgian troops and scuttled preliminary talks on bringing peace to this country ravaged by clan warfare. The United Nations said Tuesday a ceasefire monitoring committee that includes clan leaders was scheduled to meet Feb. 15. The U.S.-led military coalition working to secure aid distribution has asked clan leaders to tell it where their fighters and weapons are located to help monitor a ceasefire agreed to last month. Gen. Morgan, the son-in-law of Mr. Siad Barre, has continued fighting since Mr. Siad Barre fled into exile 10 months ago. Gen. Aideed or his aides were not immediately available for comment.

Assad, Mubarak discuss peace talks, Arab ties

CAIRO (AP) — President Hafez Al Assad and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Tuesday for talks on a wide range of regional issues, including Palestinian evictees in Lebanon and the stalled Middle East peace process. Mr. Mubarak said he would discuss with Mr. Assad the latest contacts between Egypt and the new U.S. administration "especially that there are some new developments." The Middle East News Agency (MENA) of Egypt said Mr. Mubarak returned to Cairo after the talks. In comments to Egyptian journalists accompanying him, he said he had received a message from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who visited Baghdad and Cairo last week. In the message, Mr. Mubarak said, President Saddam "asked for dialogue and explained his evaluation" of events that led to Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf crisis that divided the Arab World. Mr. Mubarak said Mr. Arafat told him President Saddam was "affected" by recent comments he made saying the Iraqi president should step down for the

sake of the Iraqi people. He said he had received many messages from President Saddam that indicate that Iraq wants to restore relations with the West and Egypt, MENA reported. Mr. Assad, accompanied by Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharara, greeted Mr. Mubarak at Damascus airport where talks started immediately. Mr. Mubarak's second sudden visit in less than a month came amid intensive Arab meetings on the eve of a regional visit by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to try to resume peace talks hindered by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of 400 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Mubarak was accompanied by his foreign minister, Amr Musa, and other officials, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said. SANA said Mr. Assad, concerned about the fate of the peace process and "Israeli intransigence" on repatriation of all the Palestinian evictees, telephoned Mr. Mubarak on Sunday and exchanged views with him on how to handle all Middle East developments.

More than meets the eye behind Iraqi offer to help UNRWA budget

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The fate of the recent Iraqi offer to make up for the budget deficit of the primary U.N. agency serving Palestinian refugees hangs in the balance as to whether the proposal is tied to the council's own call for a one-time Iraqi oil exports worth \$1.6 billion under U.N. supervision or an independent move, diplomatic sources and analysts said Tuesday. "It is not clear yet whether this is Baghdad's way of saving face and reversing its rejection of (Security Council resolutions) 706 and 712," said one Western diplomat. "Even if it is, I believe that the Security Council would have no objections since the ultimate out-

come will be Iraq's acceptance of 706 and 712." The persuasive powers of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali as well as the political disposition of the U.S. and Britain — the dominant powers in the Security Council — are the crucial factors in determining the fate of the Iraqi move, analysts say. The proposal was made by President Saddam Hussein during a meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Baghdad last week after the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees reported its budget deficit. Mr. Arafat told reporters after the meeting that Iraq, whose oil exports are banned under the international sanctions imposed on it following

its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, was offering to sell its oil under U.N. supervision to raise \$50 million for UNRWA. Palestinian sources in Amman were ambiguous over whether the idea was initiated by President Saddam himself or Mr. Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Iraq has not made it clear whether the offer was linked to resolutions 706 and 712. Iraqi sources in Amman said they did not have the full details of the proposal but that it appeared to be independent of 706 and 712 — in which case it stands to be turned down, according to Western diplomats. But Palestinians privy to last week's Saddam-Arafat talks say that the Iraqi offer is

indeed linked to the U.N. resolutions, but Baghdad was intentionally leaving it open to interpretations with a view to sounding out how its political fortunes stood in the Western world after the recent flare-up over implementation of Gulf war ceasefire terms and George Bush's departure from the White House. Resolutions 706 and 712 were issued after repeated Iraqi complaints that Baghdad did not have the funds to buy essential food and medicine exempted from the sanctions. The resolutions provided for a one-time Iraqi oil exports worth \$1.6 billion to raise funds to pay war reparations and U.N. costs and purchase food and medicine for the people of Iraq under U.N. supervision.

Baghdad, which would have little control over the proceeds from the oil sales, has rejected the U.N. plan as a violation of its sovereignty and market freedom. "In all probability, the U.S. would not object to the Iraqi proposal as long as it is not a ploy to circumvent or undermine 706 and 712," said a seasoned analyst. "I guess the issue hinges on how Baghdad presents it to the U.N." But Palestinian officials think otherwise and argue that the cash-strapped world body should accept the offer with no strings attached. "What matters is Iraq, despite its own financial problems, has made the offer and we believe that the U.N., which always complains about budget deficits and financial

shortages, should accept it," said a senior Palestinian official in Amman. "Our concern is that the UNRWA budget deficit should be addressed since it could translate into reduced services for our brothers and sisters living in refugee camps inside and outside Palestine," said the official, who preferred anonymity. Reports said that the Palestinian observer mission to the U.N. was involved in discussions with Dr. Ghali over the Iraqi proposal. The fact that there were more than one round of meetings on the issue was seen here as an indication that Dr. Ghali was taking the offer seriously. "A lot depends on how Dr. Ghali would pursue the issue further and try to convince the Security

Council members to accept it," said an Arab diplomat in Amman. "It would be very interesting to see what arguments Dr. Ghali uses to support his approach." Western diplomats here see several key factors that would determine anti-Iraq coalition's response to the Iraqi gesture. "One of the questions that would be asked by the West is that how much political capital (President) Saddam would be able to reap if the offer was accepted," said one diplomat. "The Security Council, particularly the U.S. and Britain, would not like to be seen as playing into the hands of (the Iraqi president) with an acceptance of the offer while Baghdad continues to reject the original U.N. plan." But if Baghdad is proposing that the \$50 million be deducted from the envisaged oil proceeds under resolutions 706 and 712, then

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Christopher runs major risk in Mideast mission

By Alan Elsner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is taking a big gamble by going to the Middle East on his first foreign trip, some diplomats and analysts believe.

Mr. Christopher may think he is setting out for the region on Feb. 17 with the sole aim of persuading Arabs and Israelis to return to peace negotiations, suspended since mid-December.

But he is likely to find his mission dominated by an issue that refuses to go away despite all of Washington's diplomatic efforts, namely Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories.

"I have some doubts about the wisdom of going to the region, Christopher will find himself caught up almost exclusively with the deportees," said Richard Haass, former President George Bush's special adviser on the Middle East.

"If he comes away solving it, he gets back to square one in that the peace talks can resume. But if he doesn't, it will be seen as a failure," said Mr. Haass, who is now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

And failure on his first mission could damage Mr. Christopher's prestige in the early weeks of his tenure as secretary of state.

According to this analysis, by going to the Middle East before the expellee crisis is resolved, Mr. Christopher has given away for free something very valuable — his personal involvement.

"He should have traded that for a return to the negotiating table," Mr. Haass said.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin announced last week he would allow 100 of the expellees to return and cut the expulsion terms of the rest to a one-year maximum.

Mr. Christopher instantly endorsed the move, which he had painfully negotiated with Mr. Rabin, and seemed to think the issue was closed.

But it was not. Within days, Washington had to postpone a series of Middle East regional negotiations scheduled to begin this week because Arabs were not ready to attend.

to appreciate the pressures moderate Palestinians in the occupied territories were under.

"Christopher got too little from Rabin. He has to find a solution to the deportees situation that allows the moderate Palestinians to get back in the game," he said.

One Arab diplomat said Mr. Christopher might try to persuade the Israelis, preferably before he arrived in the region, to speed up the legal appeals procedure so that all the evictees could return within a few weeks.

The 100 who are being allowed back have all refused the offer and are staying in their tents in front of television cameras on their barren Lebanese hillsides.

The evictees are all suspected members of Hamas, an Islamic fundamentalist organization whose strength and support in the occupied territories has grown enormously, not least as a result of the expulsions.

Now, some diplomats believe that Hamas, which opposes the peace process, may have an effective veto over Palestinian participation in the peace process.

Robert Satloff, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, believes it is time for the mainstream Palestinian leadership of Yasser Arafat to assert itself and take some risks for peace.

"After all, if Hamas is now permitted to set the terms for Palestinian participation in the peace talks, then it will almost surely wield a veto over whatever negotiations eventually come to pass," he said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

As the week went on, sentiment gathered even among Washington's closest Western allies that the Israeli compromise was not adequate.

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said as much on Friday while standing alongside President Bill Clinton outside the White House.

"They just don't get it," said one Middle East diplomat. "Rabin has dug this hole and until he climbs out of it completely there can't be peace talks, no matter how much everybody wants them."

The other Arab partners to the peace talks — Syria, Jordan and Lebanon — are all anxious to resume. But they are highly unlikely to do so without the Palestinians.

James Zogby, of the Arab American Institute, said the Clinton team seemed unable

Turkey urges Iran to cooperate in murder probe

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel urged Iran Tuesday to respond to evidence that Muslim radicals trained in Iran had staged political murders in Turkey.

Turkey said last week that members of the shadowy Islamic Action group, accused of killing two secular Turkish writers and an Iranian dissident, had told police they were trained in Iran.

Mr. Demirel told members of his parliamentary party he had sent a message to Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani asking him to throw light on a Turkish dossier on Islamic Action.

"Don't reject cooperation in the illumination of these incidents," Mr. Demirel said he had told Mr. Rafsanjani.

He said Iran would not be admitting guilt by providing information, but added:

"If you do not cooperate... if you do not present enough information to satisfy the Turkish state, parliament and public opinion, you will have cast a major shadow on relations."

Mr. Demirel, quoted by Anadolu news agency, was replying to a message from Mr. Rafsanjani delivered by visiting Heavy Industry Minister Mohammad Hadi Nejad-Hosseini Monday.

He said Mr. Rafsanjani had denied that Iran as a state was involved in the three murders or others for which Islamic fundamentalist groups claimed responsibility.

Mr. Demirel said a blanket denial was inadequate and Turkey wanted suspects answers to the evidence it has collected.

He said suspects arrested in Istanbul had said they had made telephone calls to a place called Maydan Khorasan, 30 to 40 kilometres from Tehran, and had been trained there.

"We are patiently trying to protect the friendship between that two countries," Mr. Demirel said. "The duty of Iran is to cooperate, to illuminate documents revealed by our security officials."

Istanbul's state security court Monday formally charged 10 out of the 19 detainees with belonging to Islamic Action and conspiring to work for an Islamic state in Turkey.

Two detainees were freed and seven were to be handed to the security court in Ankara, where

two other suspects are held.

Police have said they found cyanide, rocket launchers and 40 kilograms of explosives when they caught the suspects.

The furor over possible Iranian involvement in an Islamic murder network has rekindled Turkey's ties with its fundamentalist neighbour, but there are no signs yet of a rupture.

Iran's First Vice-President Hassan Habibi failed to turn up for a scheduled visit to Turkey Monday without explanation.

Mr. Nejad-Hosseini told reporters Mr. Habibi had not cancelled his trip and would "come later in a more sincere atmosphere."

Mr. Demirel voiced regret that Mr. Habibi had "lost the opportunity" to respond to questions about Turkey's complaints.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin, who handed documents on the affair to his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati at the weekend, was due to meet him again in Damascus Wednesday.

Mr. Velayati has said an existing Iranian-Turkish security committee could take up Ankara's demands for information.

Mr. Demirel said Turkish officials should stop commenting on the affair.

Turkish newspapers have publicised what they say is a rift between Ankara and Istanbul police, whose infighting may be hampering investigations into Muslim radicals in Turkey.

Islamic groups claimed the car-bomb murder of left-wing journalist Ugur Mumcu in Ankara on Jan. 24 and an attempt to kill Jewish businessman Jak Kamhi in Istanbul four days later.

Mr. Demirel has taken pains to avoid a war of words with Tehran.

"We are not formally accusing the state of Iran," he said. "I'm speaking with care because friendships are not easily made, but easily broken."

A leading columnist said on Monday the government's cautious approach was sending conflicting signals to Tehran.

"Either Iran is employing policies designed to shake Turkey and must be shown a solid reaction or we do not have sufficient evidence against Iran, in which case we must avoid baseless accusations," Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in Sabah newspaper.

U.S. protests Israel's delay of consular access to detainees

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States has formally protested Israel's delay in providing consular access to three American citizens who have been detained since last month, but who have not been charged with any crime.

"We have a strong interest in seeing that American citizens receive fair and proper treatment anywhere in the world and are accorded due process under the laws of the country where they are present," State Department Acting spokesman Joseph Snyder told reporters.

Two of the Americans, Mohammad Salah and Mohammad Jarad, appeared before a military court last week in Ramallah with a U.S. consular official present, and a third, Mohammad Toufek Omar, who was detained separately, also has been seen by a consular official.

"On Feb. 5, we delivered a written protest to the Israeli government against the delays in consular access to the three American detainees," the acting spokesman said, noting that an oral protest had been made earlier.

"Our position around the world and in this situation, too, is that if someone is suspected of having committed a crime, charges should be brought, access to legal counsel assured, and a public trial held," Mr. Snyder said.

"We will continue to monitor these cases closely," he said. "We are concerned about the conditions of the arrest and detention of these men."

While no formal charges have been filed against any of the three, published reports say Israeli security forces suspect they were involved with Hamas, an Islamic fundamentalist group in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Mr. Snyder said he did not expect the issue would be raised when Itamar Rabinovich, the new Israeli ambassador to the United States, met with Deputy Secretary of State Clinton Wharton to present his credentials on Feb. 8.

Pakistani ex-general to mediate among Afghans

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Pakistani architect of the 14-year Afghan war of resistance said Tuesday the warring Afghan groups had assured him of a break in fighting around Kabul to allow him to try to mediate a ceasefire.

"I have received assurances from the warring Afghan groups that they will give a break in the fighting to help me in my peace efforts," said retired Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, who led Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence in the Afghan war.

"I have appealed to the warring sides to announce a ceasefire from noon today (Tuesday)," Gen. Gul told Reuters by telephone.

Gen. Gul is credited with directing the Afghan Mujahideen groups in their war against the former Soviet-installed government.

He was waiting for clearance from aviation authorities in Kabul and in the western Pakistani city of Peshawar to board a special plane sent by Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Maverick guerrilla chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar launched a blistering rocket onslaught on the shell-shattered Afghan capital Monday, the 21st day of his offensive, killing at least 54 people and injuring more than 100.

Hospitals say 3,000 people have been injured and hundreds killed in Mr. Hekmatyar's offensive to try to unseat Mr. Rabbani.

Mr. Rabbani's representative, Interior Minister Ahmad Shah, was in Peshawar to help Gen. Gul in preliminary talks with Afghan Mujahideen leaders now living in the Pakistani city.

Gen. Gul said Afghan Vice-President Mohammad Nabi Mohammad would travel back to Kabul with him.

"I am taking many peace plans but my main thrust will be first to achieve a ceasefire," he said. "I am hopeful that the major Afghan groups will implement the ceasefire."

He said he would try to persuade the warring leaders to sit down at the negotiating table.

Gen. Gul, who commands high respect among the Mujahideen because of his role in the Afghan war, said he was optimistic about his peace mission. "It is hope which is taking me to Kabul," Mr. Hekmatyar accuses Mr. Rabbani of coming to power through a rigged vote last December, and has refused to stop fighting unless Mr. Rabbani agrees to elections within a year and the formation of an interim government.

He launched a fierce assault on Kabul last August in which 2,500 people were killed and thousands injured.

Mr. Hekmatyar has attacked the capital intermittently since he failed to gain supreme power after the Mujahideen took over from the former communist government last April.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Emirates rulers congratulate Iran

ABU DHABI (R) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) rulers, locked in a dispute with Iran over three strategic Gulf islands, sent messages to Iranian leaders Tuesday congratulating them on the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution. The official news agency WAM said UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Vice-President Sheikh Maktoum Ben Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of Dubai, sent messages to Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Sheikh Zayed, in a speech to the UAE consultative council vowed Saturday to exert every effort to reverse Iran's "occupation" of the three islands and restore his country's sovereignty over them. In December, Mr. Rafsanjani said the UAE and its Gulf Arab allies would have to "cross a sea of blood" to get to the islands. The UAE says Iran last year virtually annexed Abu Musa, jointly controlled by the two countries since 1971. Iran occupied the Greater and Lesser Tunb Islands under the late Shah of Iran, also in 1971.

Mubarak warns of population explosion

CAIRO (R) — President Hosni Mubarak urged people to control birth rates, saying Egypt's population increased in 10 years to a number that totalled the whole population of the Gulf Arab region. "We have increased in 10 years to a number that equalled the (population) of the whole Arab Gulf region," Mr. Mubarak told local journalists in remarks published Tuesday in the semi-official Al Ahram newspaper. Mr. Mubarak said Egypt did not have enough resources to feed the rising number of people, which would threaten the standard of living in the heavily-indebted country. He said out of Egypt's population of 59 million, only 12 million were working. Egypt's population was 2.4 million in 1801, rising by about 50 million until 1952, Mr. Mubarak said. "Our agricultural lands and resources cannot bear this increase," he added. Mr. Mubarak expected Egypt's population to reach 71 million by the year 2000 and 92 million by 2013.

Ozal expects stronger Clinton approach on Bosnia

WASHINGTON (AP) — Turkish President Turgut Ozal met with President Bill Clinton Monday, and came away from the meeting with the impression that the U.S. leader will "take a little stronger approach" towards Bosnia's war, he said. Mr. Ozal cautioned that Mr. Clinton did not share any details of his policy. The White House remained silent on Mr. Clinton's intentions. The president said Monday that he planned to unveil his policy in the next few days. Mr. Ozal said he and Mr. Clinton discussed a wide range of world issues, including war-torn Yugoslavia. Turkey is pushing for stronger U.S. involvement in the region, although Mr. Ozal said ground troops are not necessary. "Air strikes are sufficient to stop the heavy gun positions of the Serbs around the cities. They are causing a lot of killing in large cities. The 'no-fly zone' should be enforced. I told the president that."

Libya, Syria sign cooperation agreements

CAIRO (AP) — Libya and Syria have signed five agreements on cooperation in the fields of economy, investment, media, science, culture and health, the Libyan news agency JANA reported Tuesday. The official agency said that the agreements came after three days of talks between delegations led by Libyan Prime Minister Abu Zayd Omar Durda and his Syrian counterpart Mahmoud Zoubi. "The atmosphere during the talks... showed everybody's desire to establish integration between the two countries," Mr. Durda said after the signing. JANA, monitored by the Associated Press in Cairo, said the agreements were signed Monday night in Libya's capital Tripoli.

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PROGRAMME TWO

18:00	52 Sur L. Line
19:00	News in French
19:15	Varities
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	News in Arabic
21:00	Spotlight
21:30	Chorus
22:00	News in English
22:30	Buddhism

AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TEL. 771331

ARMENIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TEL. 772561

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

AMMAN INTERNATIONAL CHURCH TEL. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811265

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 833824, 658932

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulkam supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

PRAYER TIMES

05:01	Fair
06:14	(Sunrise) Doha
11:59	Dhuhr
14:53	'Asr
17:20	Maghrib
18:39	'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swarthef. Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 672785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624901

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 672440

De la Salle Church Tel. 681757

Terracoanta Church Tel. 622636

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Min-Max temp.

Amman	0/14
Aqaba	9/14
Dopeira	1/16
Jordan Valley	7/12

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 4, Aqaba 13. Humidity readings: Amman 97 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Muhammad Munma	741444
Dr. Mubliks Halasa	810220
Dr. Mohammad Shuqair	652643
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab	683889
Piras pharmacy	661912
Pardous pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Natrouk's pharmacy	623672
Al Salem pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsan pharmacy	637600
Natrouj pharmacy	623672
Najih pharmacy	647632

IRBID:

Dr. Al-Azram Al-Memari	(-)
Al Quds pharmacy	(-)

ZARQA:

Dr. Yusef Awad	948767
Khalifeh pharmacy	945417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	(-)
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	100
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 657777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	643402
Traffic Police	896300
Police Security Department	30321
Hotel Complaints	645900
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	(-)
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	(-)
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	(-)
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husseini Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	644261/6
Aklich Maternity, J. Amn.	642462
Jabal Amman Maternity	642565
Salas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shamsani	664171/4
Shamsani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	658545
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/51
Al-Ahli, Abdali	666164/6
Italian, Al-Muasher	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Amman	775111/26
Army, Marika	891611/15
Oqeen Aha Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	(-)
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)93323

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:25	Rome (AZ)
08:05	Damascus (PI)
08:15	Beirut (ME)
10:25	Cairo (MS)
11:30	Sanaa (IY)
12:00	Jeddah (SA)
15:00	Karachi (PI)

MARKET PRICES

Underlower price in fils per kg.

Apples	700/500
Banana	700/700
Banana (Mukammal)	500/600
Beans	650/450
Cabbage	160/100
Carrot	230/180
Cauliflower	210/160
Cucumbers (large)	150/180
Cucumbers (small)	300/250
Eggplant	500/400
Garlic	650/550
Graphfruit	180/120
Lemon (large)	270/200
Marrow (large)	200/140
Mint	440/380
Onion (dry)	210/180
Onion (green)	240/180
Orange	400/160
Pepper (hot)	380/280
Potato	180/120
Tomato	130/60
Spinach	240/180

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:05	Dubai (AZ)
07:15	Karachi (PI)
09:25	Larnaca, Damascus (RI)
10:30	Jeddah (SU)
10:30	Sanaa (IY)
10:30	Damascus (PI)
10:10	Paris, Damascus (AF)
10:30	Vicenna, Larnaca (OS)
10:50	Beirut (ME)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

08:45	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
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DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

11:00	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:00	Rome, London (RJ)
12:00	Istanbul (RJ)
12:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
19:20	Colombo (RJ)
20:40	Riyadh (RJ)
20:15	New Delhi (RJ)
20:45	Damascus (RJ)
21:30	Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:45	Sanaa (RJ)
01:00	Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)

re-elective surgery patients an now save their own blood

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In addition to the star blood donation system National Blood Bank has been, the autologous transfusion system by which a person can donate his or her own blood to be used during that person's elective-type surgery, said National Blood Bank Director, Dr. Mirza.

Blood from autologous transfusions can be stored as fresh blood or red blood cells are frozen," Mirza said, adding that special regulations are necessary to ensure that the blood is stored for a certain period.

In an interview with the Jordan Times following the inauguration of the new Amman branch, the director of the National Blood

Bank, Dr. Mirza said 1992 statistics recorded 70,000 blood donors in Jordan; an increase of 30,000 over 1990.

"Thanks to our many donors we do not have any problems with blood shortages at our banks. We always make sure we have enough units of blood from each blood group. If our quota of a certain blood group is diminishing, we call our regular donors, whose numbers we have on record, to come in and donate blood," she said.

Some people are discouraged from donating blood because of "unfounded" fears that they could contract infectious diseases.

But Dr. Mirza assures all potential donors that one can not contract any diseases by donating.

To try it once is all I ask of people," Dr. Mirza said. "They would then realise that everything is done by professionals, using sterile equipment."

In addition the donors themselves are tested for HIV 1 and HIV 2 AIDS viruses, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis and malaria, to rule out these infectious diseases," she said, adding that the blood is screened once again before storage.

Although minimum time requirements between blood donations vary from country to country, Jordan requires a time lag of no less than three months. "People can donate from the age of 18, both males and females, and can continue donating until the age of 55 if female and until 60 if male," Dr. Mirza said.

Foreign guests tour NHF

AMMAN (J.T.) — The wives of two U.S. senators currently visiting Jordan Tuesday called at Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and were briefed on the foundation's development projects and programmes.

Mrs. James Jeffords and Mrs. Hank Brown toured the NHF Jordan Design and Trade Centre (JDTC) which extends training, technical and marketing assistance to Jordanian crafts people and their families.

Early in the day, 22 German students and two professors from the Centre for Development Studies at Berlin Free University watched a slide presentation on the NHF development philosophy and programmes; toured the JDTC and visited Ghnieh village in Zarqa governorate, one of eight rural communities in which the foundation's Quality of Life Project is being implemented.

The German student's visit to the foundation is part of a two-week tour of Jordan.

Senate expected to recognise journalists — JPA or not

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) is expected to endorse the amendments its Judiciary Committee introduced to the draft press and publication law, and many deputies say the Lower House will approve at least two of the three major expected changes.

The Senate will cast its vote on the draft legislation Thursday. The committee had amended Article 2 of the draft law, proposing that "he/she who practices journalism as a profession" be recognised as a journalist.

The article as approved by the Lower House restricted recognition of journalists to members of the Jordan Press Association (JPA).

The committee also amended Article 6 of the controversial legislation, which says journalists have the right to keep their sources secret, except from the judiciary, proposing that divulgence of sources be required by

law "during trial in criminal cases."

The committee proposed that 40-member Senate approve Article 56 which prescribes punishment to violators of the law as presented by the government. The Lower House had voted to abolish this article.

A member of the Upper House told the Jordan Times that many senators attended the meetings of the 13-member committee and are in favour of its recommendations, while one deputy said the two houses "have a general understanding" that the Senate amends some articles of the law and that the House will endorse the amendments.

Deputy and former prime minister Taher Al Masri told the Jordan Times the two houses are almost agreed on the need to change some articles of the law. He pointed out that the House wanted to reconsider some of the articles of the draft legislation when it voted on the law in its entirety, but could not do so because some deputies argued

the act would be illegal.

Another deputy told the Jordan Times that representatives of the two houses might hold a coordination meeting before the casting of the final vote on the draft law, in order to find a compromise and approve the law before the end of Parliament's current and last ordinary session.

Article 2 of the draft law is the most controversial of the amended articles with the JPA and non-JPA member journalists; each lobbying for their views.

The JPA called the Senate Judiciary Committee decision to amend the law "a dangerous precedent that violates norms and tradition." It said recognition of journalists should be restricted to its members so that the profession will be regulated and protected.

A committee for the freedom of the press formed by non-JPA members said forcing journalists to join the JPA as a condition of recognition encroaches on their

right to freedom of association.

It said many journalists who are not JPA members will not be able to work if the article was approved as adopted by the House.

Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Hammam Sa'id told the Jordan Times Tuesday that his 22-member bloc will support the expected Senate's amendment of Article 2. A spokesman for the six-member independent Islamic bloc, Mutair Al Bustanji, said he supported the amendment, while a spokesman for the conservative Constitutional bloc said the 15 members of his group have not jointly agreed on a common stand. He added, however, that many deputies are in favour of the amendment. He expected the House will vote in its favour as well. While it is not clear yet whether the House will indeed vote in favour of reintroducing Article 52 to the draft law, many deputies expect a vote of approval to amending Article 6.

Ministry to urge family planning

AMMAN (J.T.) — Nearly 35 per cent of Jordanian families follow the form of family planning method, but plans to universalise the control practices in the country are in the making, according to Minister of Health Dr. Bataineh.

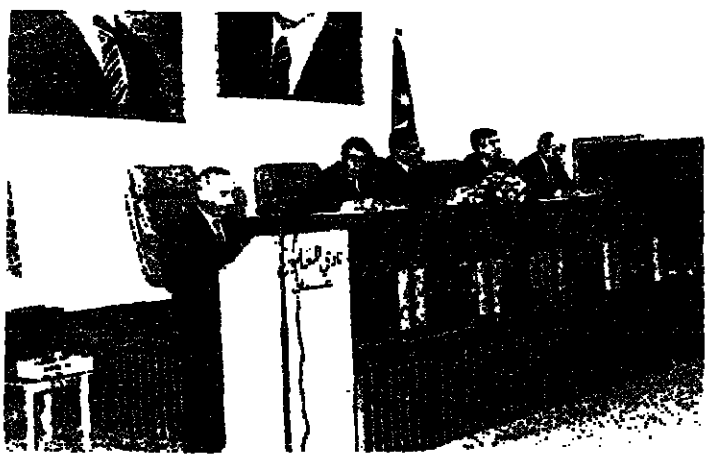
Addressing the opening session of a two-day seminar in Amman Tuesday, Dr. Bataineh said that in the past few years the ministry succeeded in reducing the infant mortality rate from 61 per thousand to 35 per thousand.

The ministry's goal is to bring the rate down to 20 per thousand, he added.

The ministry's Mother and Child Care Centres provide family planning services and information on safer and more nutritious foods for children, the minister said.

The current seminar will review results of a "fertility and family health survey" conducted by the Department of Statistics in Jordan in 1990.

Several working papers on nutrition, children's health, protection to children and their mothers against common diseases, and immunisation will be reviewed.



Speakers address participants of a two-day seminar to review a 1990 survey of fertility and family health in Jordan, Tuesday in Amman (Petra photo)

The survey \$300,000 was financed by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Meanwhile at a meeting, at the Teachers Club in Amman, Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz said that only through collecting accurate data on demographic, social

and economic trends and changes can planners chart future programmes.

He said that in the health sector the country has succeeded in spreading awareness among families on birth-spacing, proper health care for the child and mother and nutrition.

House to discuss controversial sales tax

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament will meet Wednesday to discuss the controversial sales tax draft law, the new labour draft law and a draft cooperation agreement between Jordan and China.

The House will also discuss the proposal calling for prohibiting the arrest or trial of any member of the Upper or Lower Houses of Parliament.

The House Judiciary Committee Saturday will discuss its report on the separation of and coordination between the three authorities — the executive, legislative and judiciary.

Passport process simplified

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Status and Passports Department has introduced measures designed to facilitate staff performance and offer the public better service, according to Department Director General Nasouh Muhieddin.

In a statement Tuesday, Mr. Muhieddin said that to speed up procedures the department has increased the staff charged with receiving papers, providing public information, filing and printing the passports.

Office hours have also been extended, giving applicants until 2:00 p.m. to pay passport fees, he added.

Mr. Muhieddin said the department is determined to process passport applications on the day they are received.

For applicants, a time and effort saving measure has been implemented; passport applications can now be dropped off at the Central Post Office.

Environmentalists focus on Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — An environment and energy seminar held in Amman Tuesday focused on non-traditional sources of energy and Jordan's energy sources.

Sufian Al Tal of the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Environmental Pollution (JSPEP), said the aim of the seminar was to reach consensus on methods that would help Jordan reduce the negative consequences of energy use.

He said solar energy, which is safe and inexhaustible is one of the main energy sources to be exploited.

Walter Rodel of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation — a co-organiser of the seminar — said nearly 72 per cent of all the energy used by the world is produced by non-renewable sources like coal, oil and gas while 28 per cent is produced through wood burning, hydro-electric and nuclear power plants.

Rizek Taani of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) said the RSS experiments have succeeded in utilising non-traditional sources of energy to irrigate semi-desert land and produce electric power.



The Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Environmental Pollution and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation hold a seminar Tuesday in Amman on non-traditional sources of energy (Petra photo)

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan remembers late Queen Alia

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Tuesday marked 16 years since the death of the Late Queen Alia who was killed in an air crash Feb. 1, 1977. The helicopter carrying her went down in a snowstorm on its way back to Amman from Tafleeh, where she visited the Tafleeh hospital to investigate conditions and services to the public. The Health Minister Mohammad Bashir, along with the helicopter crew, also died in the crash.

Premier urges observance of health schemes

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday issued a circular calling on civil servants to observe the provisions of the health insurance scheme regarding admission of emergency cases to private hospitals. The prime minister said paragraph B of item 1 of Article 19 of the health insurance scheme stipulates that any subscriber to the scheme who enters a private hospital as an emergency case, which is believed to endanger his or her life, has to inform Al Bashir Hospital within 24 hours following his admission, if the patient lives in Amman area. If the patient lives elsewhere, he or she has to inform the health department director or the director of any government hospital in the governorate or district where he, she lives of the case in 24 hours following admission to hospital. As a follow up on this, Health Minister Aref Bataineh sent a circular to the Association of Private Hospitals Owners, seeking their assistance in implementing the prime minister's directives, on emergency admission.

Jordan, EC discuss cooperation

BRUSSELS (Petra) — Jordan's Ambassador to Brussels Talal Sataa Al Hassan met Tuesday with the deputy chairman of the European Community (EC) committee and the European commissioner for political affairs in the Mediterranean and the Middle East regions, Manuel Marín. Mr. Al Hassan and the European official reviewed Jordanian-EC relations and ways of enhancing them. They also discussed the Middle East peace process and other issues of common interest. Mr. Sataa conveyed to Mr. Marín a written message from Foreign Minister Kamel Abu laber carrying an invitation to visit Jordan.

Abu Odeh presents credentials in Cuba

HAVANA (Petra) — Jordan's representative to the United Nations Adnan Abu Odeh Tuesday presented his credentials to Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael as Jordan's non-resident ambassador to Cuba. Mr. Abu Odeh conveyed the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty King Hussein to President Fidel Castro and to Cuba's leadership and people. In turn, Mr. Rafael requested Mr. Abu Odeh to convey President Castro's greetings to King Hussein and the Jordanian people, and noted that the friendly relations between the two countries have been enhanced through the meetings of the non-aligned movement.

Yemeni engineers visit RJGC

AMMAN (Petra) — A Yemeni delegation grouping engineers specialising in urban planning, headed by Mohammad Kazem, Tuesday visited the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) where they were briefed on the centre's duties, achievements and role in supporting the development process. The delegation toured the various sections and departments, including the remote sensing and digital maps production centres.

I Mostaqbal weekly is on the stands

AMMAN (J.T.) — The first issue of Al Mustaqbal, the weekly publication of the Al Mustaqbal party went into circulation Tuesday. It is the first party newspaper to be licensed by the government. The editor in chief of the newspaper is Suleiman al-Sayid, the secretary general of party and member of the Lower House of Parliament.



The second big snowstorm hit Jordan Tuesday, closing schools, universities and some offices (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

Snowstorm hits again

AMMAN (R) — A raging snowstorm hit Jordan on Tuesday, closing schools and universities.

The Queen Alia International Airport in Amman remained open and Army snowploughs worked to clear snowdrifts on the Kingdom's main roads.

Shops closed and most government offices were working with reduced staff.

The snowfall, which began earlier in the day, hit all parts of the Kingdom, dumping about 10 cm of snow on the northern Ajloun mountain ridge and up to 8 cm on some parts of the capital Amman, meteorological department officials said.

They said they expected the snowfall to continue throughout Thursday after which the cold air mass would ease.

Jordan's dams near capacity

AMMAN (J.T.) — Up until the end of January Jordan's rainy season has brought an estimated 4,786 million cubic metres (mcm) of rainfall which is 56 per cent of the expected annual average of 8,558 mcm, according to Ministry of Water and Irrigation estimates announced Tuesday.

The ministry's Water Resources Studies Director Samir Hijazin said Wadi Seer received 150 millimetres, the greatest amount so far this winter, while

Ma'an registered only 1.5 millimetres for the same period.

So far the Sharihabil Ben Hasneh Dam and the Kafrein Dam are full at 3.5 mcm capacities each, Dr. Hijazin reported.

The Wadi Al Arab Dam is more than 77 per cent full, at 13,225 mcm capacity; King Talal Dam is nearly 93 per cent full at 78 mcm, he said.

Wadi Shueib Dam in the Jordan Valley with a 2,225 mcm capacity is 100 per cent full.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of watercolour paintings by Syrian artist Nazir Nab's at Baladina Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by the late Syrian artist Alfred Hatmal at Al Balqa Art Gallery in Fuhels city.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Suha Noursi and Afaf Zarayk — at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles.
- ★ Exhibition of photographs by Jean-Philippe Reverdot at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Hayat Jamil Hafez at Alia Art Gallery — opening ceremony at 5 p.m.

Petra Systems Bull Groupe

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At a Press Conference held in Amman, on Monday, February 8th, 1993, Mr. Thierry Maupile - Managing Director of Groupe Bull - Middle East Operation and Mr. Mustafa A. Nasereddin - Managing Director of Petra Systems, signed a Distribution Agreement under which Petra Systems was appointed as Groupe Bull Distributor in Jordan.

Groupe Bull was founded in Europe more than 50 years ago. It is today rooted in Europe and the United States and provides a wide range of information technology to the entire world with revenues of approximately \$6 billion in 1991, Groupe Bull invests more than 10% of its revenues in R & D.

Central to the Groupe Bull strategy is the Bull Distributed Computing Model, a model for Customer information systems, which allows them to integrate their existing machines and networks (Bull or others) in their strategies for future Information Systems requirements.

Groupe Bull also markets the Bull DPX/2, a UNIX-platform range of servers, based on CISC technology.

Bull DPX/20 is a new UNIX product range of servers and workstations based on the POWER RISC technology. This line runs under the Bull Open System environment (BOS/X), which is a standard defined by the Open System Foundation (OSF).

Another highlight in the Bull offering is Bull's latest Z-LINE Family from Zenith Data Systems.

Along with the Z-LINE are Bull Compuprint printers, which range from 200 character-per-second office matrix printers to 10 page-per-minute duplex laser printers.

Also within the Bull offering is the high performance Non Impact Printing (NIP) system Mathilde which includes a fully Arabized solution.

Another variety in Groupe Bull's product range is the CPS Smart Card. Bull holds more than 500 patents for its unique technology, and has delivered more than 60 million of the smart cards to all five continents.

Also available in the Bull offering, the Bull Retail Information System linking front office operations (the point of sale) to back office management.

In addition to this impressive array of technology, Groupe Bull is also pleased to present a range of vertical Arabized solutions running on a selection of Bull platforms.

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With our apology for the unintentional mistakes included in yesterday's ad.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 6671171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Economic Forum

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Profile of Jordan's imports

JORDAN's imports of goods in 1992 grew, according to official estimates, by 19.9 per cent — a staggering jump given the target rate of 5.6 per cent admissible under the International Monetary Fund-sponsored economic adjustment programme. To downplay the seriousness of this alarming increase, a viewpoint has been passed around that most of the increase in imports was attributable mainly to the growth of the benign capital goods imports (CGI) which are necessary to sustain capital formation. Because data on the breakdown of imports are not so far available for the full year of 1992, that point of view cannot be instantly verified, negatively or positively, and thus the pleasant hypothesis of capital goods imports endures.

However, official data on the breakdown of imports are available for the first eight months and can be used in more than one way to test that hypothesis. With these eight months as a reference period, imports reached JD1,344.9 million and thereby grew by 52 per cent, way higher than the estimated 19.9 per cent growth rate for the whole year. This must mean that the 19.9 per cent rate was very conservative or that imports plummeted, not increased, during the last four months of 1992. The latter is a very faint possibility and thus actual figures will force us later to adjust the 19.9 per cent rate upwards.

The same data do indicate that CGI rose at the celebrated rate of 96 per cent but the growth rate of the malignant part of imports, that is consumer goods, was still alarmingly high at 53 per cent.

Another way of testing the situation is to compare the average monthly imports in 1992 derived from the eight months data with the monthly average of 1991. Here different results are obtained: CGI rose by 95 per cent, but the import of consumer goods rose by a mere 10 per cent, a result which tends to confirm the above hypothesis.

Still a more potent method to measure the impact of the increase in CGI on the overall growth rate of aggregate imports is to segregate the influence of CGI through assuming that CGI in the first eight months of 1992 were constant at their 1991 level of

JD154 and working out the new growth rates. Accordingly, imports during the 8-month period reached JD 1,197.4 million compared to JD887.5 million in the corresponding period of 1991. On this count, imports rose by 35 per cent. Actual aggregate imports during the last four months of 1992 must drop far behind their 1991 level so that the actual growth rate of imports in 1992 can fall down to the alarming rate of 19.9 per cent, projected by the minister of finance in the "budget speech" in December.

To gain a broader idea about the "strategic" behaviour of Jordan imports, we have worked out their growth rate in the pre-devaluation era of 1989-92 and in the pre-devaluation era of 1984-1988, after converting import figures into dollars in the years under study. Hereunder are the related growth rates:

1984	- 8%
1985	- 2%
1986	- 11%
1987	+ 11%
Annual average	- 2.5% (minus two point five per cent)
1989	- 22%
1990	+ 14%
1991	- 3%
1992	+ 19.9%

Annual average + 2.2% (plus two point two per cent)

The above results must be surprising, even shocking, to the proponents of the devaluation of the Jordan dinar. The 1988 devaluation was launched on the assumption that it would check imports. The opposite turned out to be true. After falling at an average annual rate of 2.5 per cent in the pre-devaluation era and thus being on the right track, imports grew at an annual average of 2.2 per cent after devaluation which has apparently blown them off course.

These figures must serve to destroy some of the myths that were built around currency devaluation, in Jordan in particular and developing countries in general.

Iraq's strategy — avoid confrontation, split coalition

By Victoria Graham
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — As a new U.S. administration takes over, Iraq is unveiling a new strategy to avoid confrontation, make peace overtures and split the anti-Iraq coalition.

Baghdad wants to end its international isolation, have the crippling U.N. sanctions against it lifted and get its economically vital oil exports flowing again. It also hopes to reinterpret a range of U.N. ceasefire demands to its own liking.

The first test of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's "charm offensive" could come later this week when relatives of two British prisoners intend to visit Baghdad. Iraq says that if Britain releases its frozen assets, the prisoners' cases would be viewed with compassion. That probably won't happen, but Iraq is expected to unveil its new diplomacy during the visit.

It's not clear, however, that Baghdad can overcome its outlaw reputation.

But with a new man in the White House, fractures in the Gulf war coalition and increasing

economic pressures resulting from the U.N. sanctions, Baghdad apparently believes the time has come to change tack.

After provoking confrontations in the Bush administration's final days, Iraqi officials have declared an open ended ceasefire in which they will not challenge allied warplanes patrolling the "no-fly" zones in the north and south.

In addition, Saturday's announcement that Iraq now endorses the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace talks, after vehemently opposing them, appears to be part of the new strategy. Last week Iraq offered to donate \$50 million to the U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees, if it was permitted to sell oil for that purpose.

That was an ingenious effort to tie oil sales to a popular cause, whet oil merchants' appetites and rewrite the U.N. offer of limited oil sales — which Iraq rejected earlier to its own liking.

With oil reserves of some 100 billion barrels, Iraq is hoping the lure of oil sales and exploration

will lead foreign businesses to pressure governments to ease or lift the sanctions.

Iraqi officials now welcome all investors — including the Gulf war allies — and many Europeans have already opened contacts for post-sanctions business.

Diplomats expect Iraq to make further peace gestures in the coming months. Those could include cooperating further with U.N. weapons inspectors, disclosing all the foreign suppliers of its nuclear programme, helping the U.N. deliver humanitarian assistance and extending the tenure of U.N. guards protecting humanitarian aid convoys.

Iraq especially wants the United States, Britain and France to remove the air exclusion zones set up to protect Shiite Muslims in the south and Kurds in the north. It says they were never authorised by the Security Council and undermine Iraq's sovereignty.

Iraq hopes that the Gulf war coalition, already severely frayed over the bombing runs authorised

by Mr. Bush in January, will become too weary to deal with Baghdad indefinitely.

Baghdad also hopes Mr. Clinton will not be driven by the same personal animosity towards Saddam Hussein that appeared to motivate President Bush, who declared that the U.N. sanctions would remain as long as Saddam Hussein was in power.

To do that, Iraq is expected to give Mr. Clinton time to reassess the situation in hopes that U.S. interests will require a stronger Iraq to counter Islamic fundamentalism and Iran.

Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz told reporters that Iraq was only asking the Clinton administration "to review the situation in an objective, non-personal manner."

U.S. policy against Iraq, he said, "has not made real gains in the long-term interests of the United States. The situation... is more dangerous and the prospects of peace, security and economic development are dimmer" than before the war.

LETTERS

Useful clarification

To the Editor:

I refer to the article "Hadid to head Red Crescent" (Jordan Times, Jan. 28-29, 1993), written by Elias Nasrallah.

I would like to rectify a piece of information relevant to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which appeared in the above-mentioned article.

According to the story, Mr. Mohammad Hadid was going to receive a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. This is wrong as the delegation was representing the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is a member of the same Red Cross and Red Crescent family, but which should not be confused with the others.

Indeed, the international movement of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, commonly called "International Red Cross" is a universal movement consisting of three kinds of neutral and independent organisations. These are:

1) The National Societies of the Red Cross or Red Crescent, that now exist in 153 countries.

2) The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies facilitates and enhances cooperation and solidarity among the societies mentioned above. It also helps those national societies to develop. The federation offers, notably, acts of assistance and relief to meet the needs of populations troubled with natural disasters or armed conflicts. In achieving this, the federation supports the national society/societies of the Red Cross or Red Crescent in the troubled countries. The Headquarters of the Federation is in Geneva, Switzerland.

3) The ICRC is the origin of the movement and of the creation of International Humanitarian Law (Geneva Conventions of 1949, Additional Protocols of 1977). Mandated by the International Humanitarian Law, the ICRC operates particularly in armed conflicts where it demands and looks for the respect and protection of the civilians, the wounded and the prisoners of war.

Present on all battlefields and oriented to emergency situations, the ICRC is often led to offer assistance and relief, in cooperation with the concerned national societies and their federation. This was notably manifested during the Gulf crisis when the ICRC, in cooperation with the Jordanian Red Crescent Society, erected a transit camp in Azraq where several hundred thousands of evacuees were accommodated and helped.

The headquarters of ICRC is in Geneva, Switzerland. The committee, which is represented in the region since 1948, established delegations in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, the occupied territories and in Israel in 1967. Naturally, these delegations are still active.

I hope that these remarks will be of use to you when reporting on those organisations in the future and to your readers generally.

Michel Ducreux,
Head of the Delegation,
ICRC, Amman.

If only we had peace

To the Editor:

I am a 10-year-old girl and I would like to tell you how I feel about the people dying in Iraq.

I am sure that the people who died were innocent. Those people were not even involved in the problem that is going on in the country. So why should they die?

I think that it is awful that they die, especially because of a war. Everyone should be happy; we can have peace if we help each other. So why don't we try? That way everyone will be happy.

Lina Juma,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Blood in the pipeline

THE OPENING Monday of a new branch of the National Blood Bank (NBB) in west Amman is a timely shot in the arm of the deficient process of supplying blood to the capital. Till this point in time, west Amman and its environs had been supplied with urgently needed blood mainly by the National Blood Bank, situated in east Amman, at a considerable inconvenience to hospitals and clinics located in other parts of the city. Transporting blood to patients who badly and urgently needed it from a distant location required much valuable time, a factor that often compromised the safety and survival of those patients. But with the opening of the new branch, such problems hopefully will be less frequent and complicated.

It was no coincidence that the opening of the new blood outlet took place under the patronage of Their Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, who immediately upon knowing about the existence of the problem pressed for its rectification. This happened a year ago when a child died in a hospital in the Jabal Amman area, reportedly because it was not possible to supply him with blood immediately. It was in the aftermath of this tragic incident, and probably many others, that the problem had to be tackled and solved as soon as possible. Now that the time factor has been satisfactorily addressed, at least in as far as blood supplies to the west Amman area, what remains to be done is review the procedures through which blood can be made available in minimal time and establish more blood banks in all the regions of the Kingdom that need them, preferably, still, in all hospitals.

Current blood bank regulations call for the donation of blood from the family of any patient in need before the requested blood is released, even in an emergency situation. Often this procedure is cumbersome and time consuming. The public is entitled to a more efficient and functional approach to this way of blood collection and distribution in order to avoid jeopardising lives.

Thanks to the intervention of Their Royal Highnesses, and the valuable aid from the U.S. government, a step has finally been taken towards solving the blood supply puzzle in Jordan. But there are more measures that have to be taken before we can boast of solving totally yet another problem faced by our developing nation. Spreading awareness about voluntary donation of blood and stepping up efforts to reduce car and other accidents are but two measures that could and should be immediately adopted. Overhauling our public health services, taking another deep look at the whole health delivery system in the Kingdom as well as raising money for existing and new medical facilities are goals that may not be achievable in the short term. Nevertheless, they are within grasp if only we would start thinking about them today and take them seriously.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily, in its editorial Tuesday, dwelt on the contents of His Majesty King Hussein's address to a delegation representing the youth sector from the northern badia region, noting that his words served as directives leading the young generation towards further efforts and further sacrifice for a brighter future. The paper noted that the King was careful to emphasise the role of the youth as the main element for shaping the future of this country, stressing that it is on the youth that Jordan depends for the implementation of its socio-economic schemes. Stressing the importance of the youth in carrying out the task of attaining the aspirations of the nation, the King was careful to note to his audience that the leadership and people of the country were acting in line with the principles and aiming to achieve the goals of the Great Arab Revolt, the paper pointed out. Furthermore, King Hussein called attention to the need for the youth sector to enhance the concept of democracy through their collective efforts and their enlightened intellect, the paper added. The paper expressed pride in the King's wise leadership and his continued endeavour to encourage his countrymen towards the fulfilment of the nation's aspirations.

TAREQ MASARWEH, a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily, Tuesday praised a motion submitted by Parliament calling on Jordan to refrain from imposing any sanctions or siege on any Arab state. The writer said that as Arabs, and part of this Arab Nation, we should not try to harm our brothers and sisters and we should realise that our higher national interests come before United Nations' orders. We take pride in the deputies who put forth the proposal, because they realise that nothing should be done to harm other Arabs and the western coalition should not be allowed to have its way, said the writer. But, he added at the same time Jordan alone cannot terminate the sanctions, noting that the past two years proved that the other Arab states were not willing to take Jordan's stand. He said that Jordan was continuing to supply food and drugs to the Iraqi people despite the fact that the 600 trucks carrying these essential products have now been reduced to 60 a day. It is known that the deputies reflect in their feelings those of the Jordanian masses, but these same deputies also realise that it is impossible for Jordan to shoulder this heavy task all by itself and face the sanctions and the mounting pressure on the Kingdom, said the writer. He said it should be emphasised that the government, which also strives to serve national interests, understands fully the situation and was trying to ensure continued help to the Iraqi people.

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Palestinians push for European export markets

LONDON (R) — Palestinian enterprises from the Israeli-occupied territories opened their first trade fair in Britain Tuesday, launching a bid for expanded European export markets as part of their campaign for a Palestinian state.

"This is one aspect of the Palestinian intifada," Hanna Siniora, president of the European-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce, told an opening ceremony for the six-day fair for about 30 firms from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"We Palestinians are trying to show the world that we want... to have a place in the international community, in trade and commerce and markets — especially in Europe," Mr. Siniora said.

Abdel Karim Al Mudaris, secretary general of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, co-organiser of the fair with Mr. Siniora's group, also stressed the political aspects of the fair.

He said the Palestinians, in launching their bid to open new markets in the European Community, were at the same time "gaining success in asserting their national identity."

"In this context this fair should be seen as an aspect of the peaceful struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their national aspirations," Mr. Mudaris told the audience, which included the Kuwaiti ambassador and other Arab diplomats.

In a sign of British support, a government official addressed the launch ceremony on behalf of Overseas Development Minister Baroness Chalker, saying Britain was committed to the economic development of the occupied territories.

But Ms. Chalker, in the speech read by the official, said economic growth would remain constrained until a political settlement was found in the Middle East peace talks.

Affid Safieh, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's representative in Britain, hit out at Israel, accusing the Jewish state of stalling the Middle East peace process. "At this pace the quest for peace may take decades," he said.

Mr. Siniora, who said a similar fair displaying agricultural and light industrial goods, handicrafts and tourism services was being planned for France in April, complained about Israeli restrictions on direct Palestinian exports.

Israel keeps tight control on development in the occupied territories, restricting the growth of agriculture and industries which could compete with Israeli products.

Ms. Chalker, in her remarks, said she hoped that direct Palestinian exports to Britain would amount to about £10 million (\$14.25 million) over the next three years.

Worst snowstorm hits evictees

(Continued from page 1)

snow covered tents and only a few evictees braved the storm to look for firewood. But they received food, including chicken and jam, smuggled in during the night.

Dr. Omar Farwana, head of their own medical team, said more of the men were falling sick. He was worried that the condition of some of them would worsen because of the harsh weather.

Expellees refused on Monday to allow the evacuation of any more of their sick or wounded to Israel after Israeli troops took five ailing evictees from a hospital in the Jewish state's South Lebanon "security zone" to jails in Israel Sunday.

Israel said the five, evacuated from the camp by helicopters last month, were on a list of 101 of expellees Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said a week ago would be allowed to return from exile immediately.

The Palestinians dismissed the U.S.-brokered offer for the 101 to return and for the term in exile for the rest to be cut to a maximum of one year as a manoeuvre to avoid U.N. sanctions against Israel.

They insist the U.N. Security Council implement Resolution 799, adopted unanimously a day after they were banished on Dec. 17. It demands Israel takes them all back immediately.

Air collision casts pall on Iranian festivities

TEHRAN (Agencies) — The deaths of 134 people in a collision between a jetliner and an air force warplane cast a somber pall Tuesday as Iran celebrated the 14th anniversary of the Islamic revolution.

Aviation authorities announced an investigation was under way into Monday's crash, which occurred when an SU-24 jet fighter flew into the tail of the Tupolev-154, a Russian airliner leased to the state-run Iran Air Tour.

The warplane was participating in a fly past to mark air force day, the anniversary of the day when aviators became the first branch of the Iranian armed forces to declare loyalty to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Many of the passengers aboard the jetliner were young couples making a pilgrimage to the northeastern holy city of Mashhad as an Iranian version of a honeymoon.

The plane was running at least an hour late when the military jet sliced its tail in mid-air.

There was no official explanation for the cause of the crash, which sent bodies tumbling to the ground.

But newspapers quoted informed sources as blaming the collision on air controllers and the delay in the Tupolev's departure.

All 132 people aboard the leased Russian-built airliner died. The death toll rose to 134 when Iran confirmed that the pilot and co-pilot of the Sukhoi, one of two seen near the Tupolev, also were killed.

Newspapers said the Tupolev was one of 10 Russian planes rented by Iran Air from the Russian state airline Aeroflot last year, of which six have so far been delivered.

"The rented planes are advanced and faultless in their class," said an Iran Air official, quoted by Hamshahri paper.

Iran is not known to have Sukhoi warplanes but Iraq moved 148 civilian and military planes, including 75 Sukhois, to Iran during the Gulf war over Kuwait to avoid destruction by the U.S.-led military alliance.

The crash occurred at 10.15 a.m. (0645 GMT), an hour and a half after the Tupolev had been due to take off.

Iranian press reports Monday quoted witnesses as saying the bodies of the victims "scattered in the sky and began falling swiftly" after the Sukhoi warplane crashed into the tail of the airliner, which was carrying 119 passengers and 13 crew.

Apparently because the crash occurred as 10-day revolution celebrations approached their climax, the government did not announce the customary day of national mourning, angering some citizens. The festivities culminated Thursday, the anniversary of the proclamation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"People are being really critical, almost boiling about why this happened," said Ali, a taxi driver.

The plane crash was played down by the state-controlled radio and television, whose lead stories were the visit to Tehran of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, and the revolution celebrations.

The families of the victims initially were told they could collect the remains of their loved ones on Monday for burial, but later this was delayed for a day.

Television images showed piles of debris and clothing on a vacant lot inside the Revolutionary Guards barracks over which the two planes collided, shortly after the jetliner took off from Tehran's Mehrabad airport.

The jetliner's crew of 13 included a Russian pilot and four other Russians. No other foreigners were on board, civil aviation authorities said.

Aviation inspectors have launched a search for the plane's inflight "black box" recorders, which could provide clues.

The airport serves passenger and military aircraft. Its parallel runways can endanger civilian flights when warplanes are on manoeuvres.

The Tehran crash was the worst in Iran since a Dutch built chartered Fokker friendship went down south of the capital April 26, 1992, killing 39 people.

A passenger plane carrying pilgrims from Tehran to Mashhad crashed near the capital in February 1980, killing 128 passengers.

On July 3, 1988, 290 people died when an Iran Air A-300 Airbus was shot down by the American warship USS Vincennes over the Gulf.

Relatives visit Britons detained in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Two Britons jailed by Iraq embraced family members weeping for joy at Iraq's main prison Tuesday in a high-profile mission by the relatives to win their freedom.

Iraqi officials had no immediate reaction. Baghdad has linked an early release to demands that the British government free Iraqi assets frozen during the Gulf war.

"We are asking the Iraqi government what their intentions are in relations to these two men," said British Red Cross chief Michael Whitlam, who accompanied the relatives from London.

The two Britons, Michael Wainwright, 42, and Paul Ride, 33, are serving long terms at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison for illegally entering Iraq.

Mr. Wainwright's mother, Iris, sister Heather Horne, Mr. Ride's wife Julie and their 18-month-old son William entered the prison in a Russian embassy vehicle. Russia handles British interests in Iraq.

"They are very well looked after," Mrs. Ride said of the treatment the prisoners were receiving at the prison, 30 kilometres west of Baghdad.

She looked cheerful as she walked into the lobby of Baghdad's Al Rasheed hotel after the visit, holding William.

Her husband was sentenced to seven years in prison after straying into Iraq from Kuwait. The mother and sister of Mr. Wainwright, serving 10 years after having cycled into Iraq from Turkey, would not answer reporters' questions.

But Mr. Whitlam said: "They are looking fit and well."

The British government said Tuesday Iraq's relations with the West would be improved if Baghdad unconditionally released the two Britons.

Foreign Office Junior Minister Mark Lennox-Boyd, rejected suggestions from Iraq that Britain should unfreeze Iraqi assets in return for their freedom.

"They should release these men straight away and then of course the future will be slightly better from their point of view in their relationship with the West," he told British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) television.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd said if Iraq needed funds for food and other humanitarian goods it should take up a U.N. offer for Baghdad to sell oil worth some \$1.6 billion for such purchases.

Mr. Whitlam said he had asked for meetings with Iraqi officials whom he expected to see on Wednesday but added that he was not here to plead their case.

"I am (here) on a humanitarian capacity," he said. "I am not acting as an intermediary between the governments."

But he said he would explore what Baghdad had in mind for the prisoners.

"I am asking the government what their intentions are in relations to these men," he said.

Iraq released Briton Ian Richter in November 1991 after serving seven years of a life sentence when Britain agreed to release about \$120 million of Iraq's frozen assets to buy food and medicine.

The relatives will visit the jailed Britons Wednesday again and leave Baghdad Thursday.

Fifth leftist party gets license

(Continued from page 1)

"We are happy to start a new era operating publicly after the hard years of clandestine work," he said.

Interior Minister Jawdat Shoul noted that the party pledged to obey prohibitions on links with foreign organisations. Late last year, Mr. Shoul rejected three leftist parties on grounds of foreign ties, but reversed the decision after intervention by the ministerial committee and compliance with certain prerequisites by the parties.

There are noted five licensed leftist parties, six pro-establishment groups, and the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Islamic Action Front.

The government Monday legalised the Yaqaza Party, a pro-establishment faction led by deputy Abdul Raouf Rawadbeh, a minister in several former governments.

More than meets the eye

(Continued from page 1)

"there is little reason for the Security Council to reject it."

Another Western diplomat observed that "there cannot be any dismissal of the fact that Baghdad hopes to gain political capital and increased popularity among the Palestinians" through suggesting that it was willing to "abandon its arguments of sovereignty and market freedom for the sake of the Palestinian cause."

But Washington, which led the anti-Iraq coalition which fought Iraqis out of Kuwait in February 1991, could turn the proposal around and use it as one of the bargaining points in its efforts to defuse the crisis sparked by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of over 400 Palestinians.

"The possibility remains open that the U.S. might consider whether a Security Council approval of Iraqi oil sales to raise funds to serve Palestinian refugees would help pacify the Palestinian leadership with a give-and-take compromise over the expellee crisis," said another European envoy.

The Palestinians are insisting on punitive measures against Israel for refusing to implement Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for the immediate return home of the nearly 400 Palestinians the Jewish state expelled to South Lebanon in December.

Israel, coming under increasing international pressure, has offered to take in 101 of the evictees in addition to already allowing the return of 13 others who it said were expelled in "error."

But the Palestinians rejected the offer saying all the evictees, who are now stranded in an icy tent camp in South Lebanon, should be allowed to return home.

At stake is the future of the American-sponsored Middle East peace talks. The next round of the multilateral phase of the peace talks has already been postponed indefinitely. The Palestinians have said they would not attend the bilateral phase as and when it resumes as long as the expellees are not allowed to return.

"No doubt the political strateg-

ists in Washington would explore this avenue with a view that U.N. acceptance of the Iraqi offer could be a pay-off for the Palestinians as part of a deal to resolve the crisis," said the diplomat.

But Palestinian officials rejected the idea out of hand. "The problem of the expellees and Israeli defiance of Security Council resolutions have to be handled on their own," said one of them. "We will not accept a linkage, just as the West did not accept a linkage between the Kuwait crisis and the Palestinian problem."

Shortly after the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq coupled its occupation of the emirate with Israel's occupation of Arab territories and offered a deal under which an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories would be contingent on each other.

The linkage was dismissed by Washington and other Western countries as well as some Arabs as an Iraqi political ploy to gain Palestinian and Muslim sympathies.

Senior UNRWA officials in Amman said the agency was not involved in the discussions at the U.N. headquarters.

"I believe it is an issue to be handled at the top levels of the U.N. and Security Council," said Ele Saaf, UNRWA headquarters coordinator in Amman. "At this point, UNRWA, a strictly non-political organisation, is not involved."

"Of course we are concerned over our budget deficit and would be more than glad if the U.N. Security Council finds it fit to accept the deal and thus make up for the shortfall," he said.

Mr. Saaf added, however, that allocations for UNRWA from the oil proceeds under the deal envisaged by resolutions 706 and 712 could be a long way off.

"UNRWA would be somewhere down the list of priorities in this context," he said, referring all further questions to the UNRWA headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

U.S. launches Mideast drive

(Continued from page 1)

Liberation Organisation (PLO). Israel's new ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, who presented his credentials to Deputy Secretary of State Clifford Wharton Monday, said that allowing the expellees themselves to dictate what was acceptable was a fundamental mistake because they were opposed to the peace process.

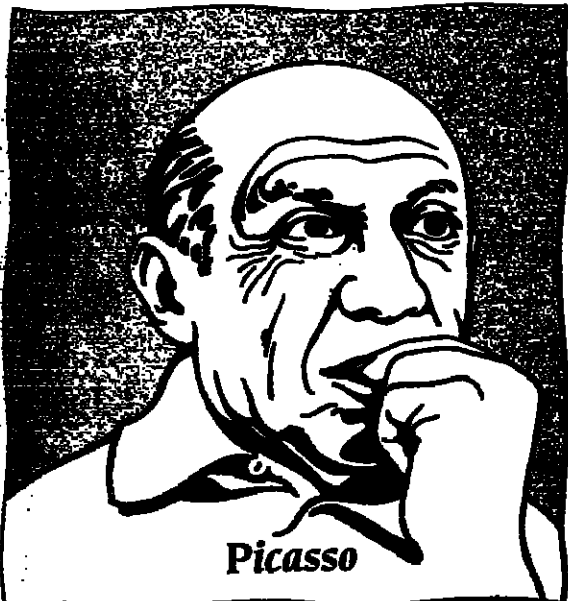
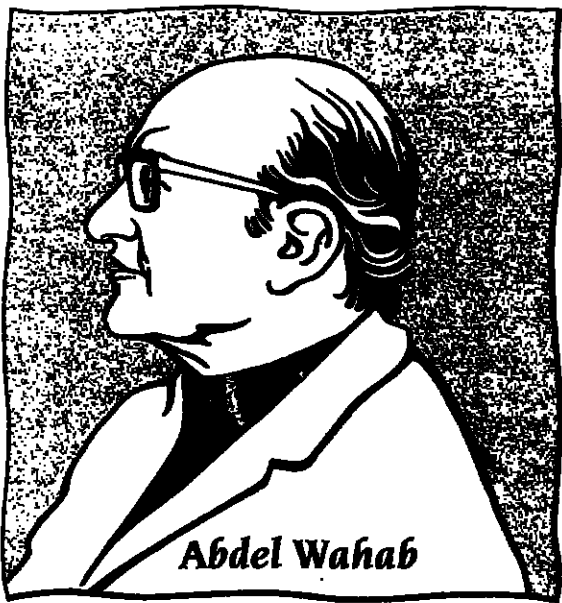
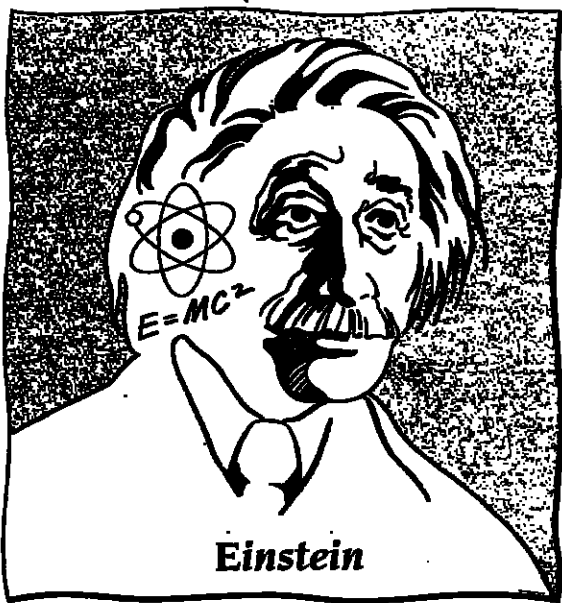
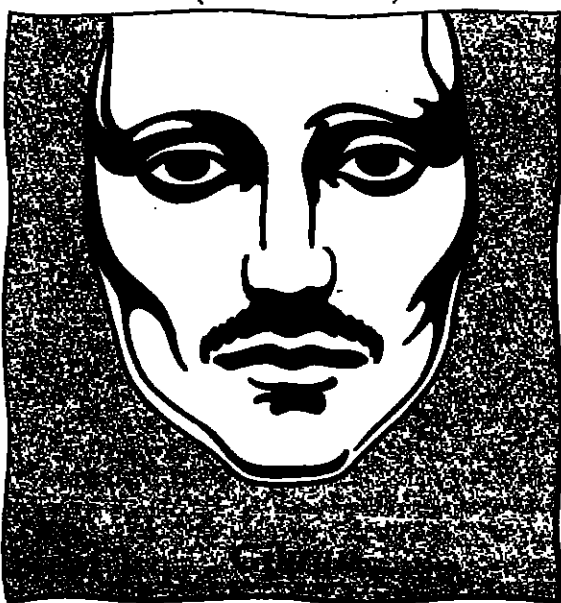
"We have to bear in mind that we are dealing with a group seeking to derail the talks," said Mr. Rabinovich.

"The Palestinian community needs to ask itself whether it is interested in the peace process or not," he said.

If it was, then talks could resume very soon, he said.

But Mr. Rabinovich said negotiations were unlikely to reconvene before early April.

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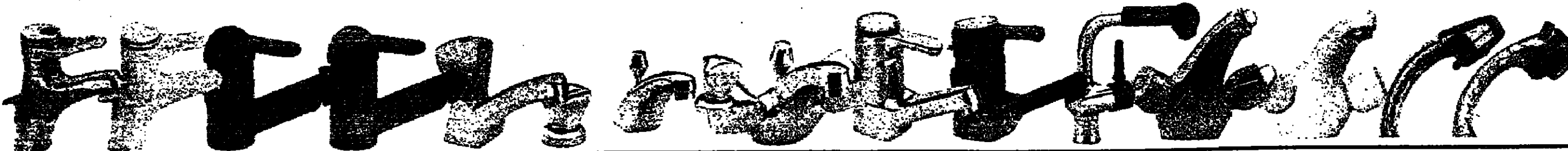
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Romania seeks oil and gas deals with Gulf Arab states

ABU DHABI (R) — Romania is seeking to refine crude oil from Gulf Arab states to boost output at its refineries, Deputy Foreign Minister Gheorghe Tinea has said.

He told Reuters he was also discussing projects with Gulf states to develop gas liquefaction facilities in Romania to serve as a conduit for the Gulf region's gas exports to Europe.

He said talks include a long-term project for a pipeline and gas terminal on the Black Sea.

"We have to increase our imports of crude. We are obliged to meet (refining) capacity of 30 million tonnes," Mr. Tinea said.

Mr. Tinea is visiting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to boost economic ties under a bilateral agreement signed by the two countries last August. Oil refining cooperation is one of the

agreement's five objectives.

He said oil and gas talks would figure high on the agenda of discussions during his stay of several days in Abu Dhabi and later in Qatar, Oman and Bahrain.

"In all the Gulf countries this is one of the main issues of discussion. Gas is a little more complicated. You have to liquefy it, you need terminals. But this is in the picture, we are going to discuss it," he said.

"After liquefying it they can export through the Danube to parts of Europe," Mr. Tinea said. "We are interested in how we can link ourselves...to the projects, like the Iranians are talking of a pipeline which will reach Ukraine in the north. We want to be in the picture with all this."

Nicolae Irimie, Romania's ambassador to the UAE, said Romania imports about eight million tonnes of crude oil per year (160,000 barrels per day) from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE and Libya.

It also imports about five million tonnes of crude per year (100,000 b/d) from Russia. Domestic crude production stands at eight million tonnes," Mr. Irimie said.

Mr. Tinea said Romania wants to buy crude oil direct from the UAE and refine it for a free for export to parts of Europe.

Current refining output is about 20 million tonnes a year (400,000 b/d), he said.

He said negotiations were going on for a loan from the Abu Dhabi Fund for Economic Development (ADFD) to develop Romania's petrochemical industry.

Paul Coman, Romania's minister of state for economic and financial affairs, had said in July that the loan would be used for seven or eight oil projects including one to increase the country's refining capacity.

Mr. Tinea said Romania's President Ion Iliescu would discuss the loan with ADFD officials during a visit to the Gulf region which may take place in April.

Qatar to build \$275m steel mill this year

DUBAI (R) — Qatar will start building a \$275 million steel mill with an annual capacity of 500,000 tonnes before the end of the year, an official was quoted Tuesday as saying.

Nasser Al Mansouri, head of the Qatar Steel Company (QASCO), told Al Khaleej newspaper the firm was also upgrading an existing mill built to produce 526,000 tonnes per year to reach 700,000 tonnes.

QASCO, founded in 1974, produced 567,000 tonnes of steel blocks in 1992 and would increase output from the original mill by 140,000 a year until it reached the target, he said.

It sold products in 1992 worth 700 million riyals (\$192.4 million) to achieve a record profit of 145 million riyals (\$40 million), he added.

Mr. Mansouri said 25 international companies had submitted bids to build the new mill and "strong competition" was expected between German, Japanese, Italian and British firms.

QASCO will have to double its paid up capital of \$82 million "which is welcomed by the foreign partners. The company will not find difficulty to finance the new project locally and international," he said.

The Qatar government owns 70 per cent of QASCO, Japan's Kobe Steel Ltd. holds 20 per cent while the remaining shares are held by the Japanese trading house Tokyo Boeki Co.

Iran plans \$4b investment in petrochemicals

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said Monday it planned to invest \$4 billion in its petrochemical industry in a five-year plan starting in March 1994 which would help increase capacity to 12 million tonnes.

The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Deputy Oil Minister Ahmad Rahgozar as saying the ministry estimated 60 per cent of the capacity in the second development plan would be exported.

Iran's first five-year development plan ends in March 1994 and the government is now drawing up plans for a second plan to follow it.

IRNA said Iran's petrochemical capacity in the first plan stood at nine million tonnes.

It quoted Mr. Rahgozar as telling the Hamshahri newspaper

that the investment would be enough "to undertake six petrochemical projects in the second development plan."

"Studies have already been made on the international status of the petrochemical products and certain plans have been adopted for exporting the petrochemical products," he said.

He said that among the products Iran was planning to export were plastics and a fuel additive used in lead-free petrol.

"Also studies have been made on the ways and means for direct foreign investment in Iran as well as on partnership with foreign entrepreneurs," he said, but added that a foreign role would have to be first approved by the government.

IRNA said the current value of

Iran's petrochemical products was about \$800 million which it said was expected to rise to \$2 billion in two years.

It said Iran's revenues in the past year from the export of 1.5 million tonnes of petrochemical products stood at about \$150 million and were expected to rise to \$400 million in two years.

IRNA also said Iranians were consuming so much energy that the country may be forced to halt oil exports early in the next century to meet domestic demand.

The agency quoted Mohammad-Jafar Eslami, deputy director of the official Plan and Budget Committee, as saying that oil consumption in Iran had grown almost fourfold in 18 years.

Mr. Eslami said that if domestic demand continues to grow, "oil exports will drop to nil by the time the next generation" reaches adulthood.

Mr. Eslami said oil consumption in Iran had grown 99.1 barrels in 1973 to 395 million barrels in 1990.

He added that the nominal capacity of the country's power plants had doubled since 1979, while the number of subscribers had tripled.

Mr. Eslami said the consumption of natural gas had risen from

2.5 billion cubic metres in 1979 to 25 billion cubic metres in 1992.

The bulk of the energy, Mr. Eslami said, said for household use, and did not indicate increased economic activity.

Iran, a major oil exporter among the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, is grappling with a rapidly growing population of 60 million which is set to double in 25 years.

Iran's current OPEC quota restricts production to 3.5 million barrels a day, but its production capacity is about 4.2 million. Oil officials say that will increase to 4.5 million barrels a day later this year.

But industry experts say any increase beyond that will need massive investments to overhaul the country's outdated production facilities.

Iran's population grew by 23 million from 1977 to 1992, but its economic infrastructure remained stunted by the turmoil of the 1979 Islamic revolution, and the devastating eight year war with Iraq which halted in August 1988.

Iran's gas reserves total 20 trillion cubic metres, the largest of any single country. But only a fraction of Iranian households and industries receive piped gas.

Petra Systems becomes France's Groupe Bull distributor for Jordan

AMMAN — Petra Systems and Groupe Bull of France held a joint press conference Monday, February 8 during which they announced the appointment of Petra Systems as Groupe Bull distributor for Jordan.

Mr. Mustafa Nasereddin, managing director of Petra Systems, said that "the company will market and support the wide spectrum of Groupe Bull solutions from Zenith Data Systems PCs and Notebooks at one end, to Unix Risc platforms and mainframe systems for high-end customers adding as well specific solutions such as ATMS, POS and high-speed Arabic printing Systems."

Mr. Thierry Maupile, managing director of Groupe Bull Middle East Operations, added that Groupe Bull, one

of the largest information technology suppliers in the world and European leading company with worldwide revenues of nearly \$6 billion in 1992, is active in 120 countries with a workforce of 35,000 employees. Bull, he said, is dedicated to meeting the needs of the Jordanian customers, as it is doing around the world, by providing total solutions (hardware, software and services) tailored by industry markets (public sector, banking, retail, manufacturing and telecommunications).

The press conference was followed by a reception attended by the Jordanian minister of industry and trade, the French ambassador to Amman, a large number of people interested in information systems and journalists.

Bank of Israel warns of bubble in stock market

TEL AVIV (R) — The governor of the Bank of Israel warned Israelis that the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange could become a "financial bubble" that could wipe out their savings.

Jacob Frenkel's comments on army radio ignited protests from bankers Tuesday, who maintained they did not believe stock values were inflated.

"What is important here is real investments, in factories, in employment, in export, and not some financial bubble that grows and grows," Mr. Frenkel told army radio Monday. "We must be very wise in this matter."

The blue chip shares index has doubled in the past year, closing Monday up 1.20 per cent to 218.17 — based on 100 on Jan. 1, 1992. The 1992 performance, a record, followed strong rises in the previous two years.

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange had no immediate comment on Mr. Frenkel's statements. Blue chip stocks fell in initial trading.

Israeli shares, blue chips as well as small issues, had risen Monday for a seventh consecutive day. A private fund manager said: "With so much cash seeking to be invested, why should the market stop?"

But Mr. Frenkel, a former chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, warned Israelis the stock market did not

guarantee rising stock prices.

"I must tell you that I am worried when I see people endanger all their savings for retirement, for old age, taking them out of savings funds just to invest them in the market," Mr. Frenkel said.

The head of the bank repeated his warning on army radio Tuesday, saying optimism about the economy had spurred growth but many investors did not understand the risk.

"Today we see people with savings who don't understand exactly what goes on with the market, entering it like a herd, and thinking that what happened yesterday must also happen tomorrow," Mr. Frenkel said.

Private banking officials disagreed, saying the substantial growth in the Israeli economy since 1989 when Soviet Jewish immigrants began arriving justified the rising market.

"I do not think this is hysteria," said Meir peles of Bank Leumi, the second largest bank in Israel. "I am somewhat amazed by harsh terms like 'financial bubble'."

"For a long period there has been a rise in the market, of hundreds of per cent in the last three years," the bank official told army radio. "I do not think what is happening with us is a financial bubble."

Australian premier unveils an upbeat economic package

CANBERRA (R) — Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating raised the stakes Tuesday in his bid to hold power, unveiling a package of spending measures, corporate tax breaks and asset sales aimed at boosting the economy.

The stock market surged, bonds rallied and the Australian dollar firmed after Mr. Keating unveiled the economic plans ahead of the March 13 federal election.

But conservative opposition leader John Hewson quickly questioned whether a Keating labour government could pay for extra spending of 2.6 billion Australian dollars (\$1.74 billion) over four years, funded in part by the sale of another 19 per cent of the Commonwealth Bank, now 70 per cent government-owned.

Mr. Keating said he planned to cut the corporate tax rate to 33 per cent from 39 per cent, boost investment through increased de-

preciation allowances and help small businesses by encouraging banks to lend. On the social side, he announced plans to boost spending on child care.

Mr. Keating said the measures would increase the budget deficit by 2.6 billion Australian dollars (\$1.74 billion) over four years between 1993/94 and 1996/97.

The All Ordinaries share index ended at 1,583.9 points, up 24.5 points on the day or 1.6 per cent.

The March 10-year bond futures contract ended at a yield of 8.65 per cent, down 18 basis points, and the local dollar finished at 67.12 U.S. cents from 66.94 just before the announcement.

"The markets are looking at it and saying perhaps it's not as bad as they thought it was going to be," said Bankers Trust Australia chief economist Chris Caton.

Financial Markets

in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Mar 8/93	Tokyo Close Mar 9/93
Sterling Pound	1.4390	1.4322
Deutsche Mark	1.6570	1.6612
Swiss Franc	1.5560	1.5415
French Franc	5.6060	5.6118 **
Japanese Yen	123.60	122.35
European Currency Unit	1.1760	1.1739 **

100 Per Cent, European Opening at 9:00 A.M. GMT

European Interest Rates Date: 9/2/93

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.18	5.18	5.25	5.02
Sterling Pound	6.43	6.12	5.62	5.50
Deutsche Mark	8.50	8.18	7.75	7.25
Swiss Franc	5.37	5.31	5.12	4.93
French Franc	11.31	11.25	10.12	9.25
Japanese Yen	5.06	3.25	3.21	3.21
European Currency Unit	4.43	9.31	9.00	8.53

Interest rate bid rates for overnight borrowing 1/8% (0.125%) and equivalent.

Previous Months Date: 9/2/93

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Oz	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Oz
Gold	327.95	0.35	Silver	3.67	.080

31 bars

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 9/2/93

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6920	0.6940
Sterling Pound	0.9584	0.9633
Deutsche Mark	0.4161	0.4182
Swiss Franc	0.4485	0.4507
French Franc	0.1230	0.1236
Japanese Yen	0.5650	0.5678
Dutch Guilder	0.3697	0.3715
Norwegian Krona	0.0921	0.0926
Italian Lira	0.0452	0.0454
Belgian Franc	0.02018	0.02028

Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 9/2/93

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.3150	1.3290
Lebanese Lira	0.05655	0.05955
Saudi Riyal	0.1442	0.1450
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2500	2.2900
Omani Riyal	0.1575	0.1586
Egyptian Pound	0.1950	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7620	1.7830
U.A.E. Dirham	0.1875	0.1886
Greek Drachma	0.5105	0.5255
Cypriot Pound	1.3400	1.4190

Per 100

CAR Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	7/1/1993 Close	8/2/1993 Close
All-Share	194.58	194.06
Banking Sector	159.25	158.56
Insurance Sector	216.44	216.39
Industry Sector	270.59	269.95
Services Sector	256.65	259.62

December 31, 1992 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.2667/72	Canadian dollar
	1.6575/85	Deutschmarks
	1.8650/60	Dutch guilders
	1.5365/75	Swiss francs
	33.20/24	Belgian francs
	5.6100/50	French francs
	1530/1535	Italian lire
	122.51/56	Japanese yen
	7.4800/900	Swedish crowns
	7.0200/300	Norwegian crowns
One sterling	1.4230/40	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	\$327.70/\$328.20	

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Cinema **PLAZA** Tel.: 699238

Basic Instinct

Starring: Michael Douglas and Sharol Stone

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

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• المركز الثقافي الفرنسي ت: ٦٦١٠٦٥٨ • مطعم كستور ت: ٦٥٩٠١٩

Cambodia group kills five, attacks U.N. posts

PHNOM PENH (R) — A large armed group killed five Cambodians and injured many more during a rampage overnight that also targeted U.N. premises, a spokesman for the world body said Tuesday.

Forty people carrying a variety of weapons including rocket launchers hit six areas of Baka district in the western province of Pursat province through the night Monday, Eric Berman told reporters.

The assailants fired small arms and rockets at random killing five Cambodians and wounding 16, some seriously. There were no casualties reported among U.N. staff in the area.

Several buildings of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) came under fire. Mr. Berman said.

Shots were also fired at offices of the ruling Cambodian People's Party and the opposition royalist party.

Some of the distinctive white UNTAC vehicles were damaged during the attack.

The U.N. will investigate the attack which occurred in an area believed to be under the control of the Phnom Penh government. The government controls about four-fifths of the country, with the rest in the hands of Khmer Rouge guerrillas who have refused access to U.N. peacekeepers.

Mr. Berman was not ready to name any suspects. Meanwhile, a second royalist office near the town of Chikreng in Siem Reap province in the northwest came under attack during the night.

A B-40 rocket hit the roof of the office early Tuesday morning injuring four people, Mr. Berman said, adding that U.N. officials had earlier inspected the office as part of duties aimed at protecting people from political violence.

French President Francois Mitterrand is due to visit the Angkor Temple complex in Siem Reap province Friday.

Meanwhile, a Cambodian head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk arrived back in Phnom Penh Tuesday to a warm and colourful welcome but expressed concern about the United Nations' shaky peace plan for his war-weary country.

Asked his response to the state of the Cambodian peace agreement, Prince Sihanouk replied: "I'm not pessimistic but I cannot say I'm optimistic. I'm going to try and tackle the different problems."

The U.N. peace agreement has been dogged by one crisis after another ranging from the refusal by the Khmer Rouge guerrillas to participate in elections to an ongoing campaign of political violence and assassination directed against the country's main opposition parties.

Looking hale and hearty, and dressed in a dark grey business suit, Prince Sihanouk arrived in Phnom Penh aboard a North Korean jet.

Prince Sihanouk left Cambodia in November last year and has been suffering from a range of ailments including circulation problems attributed to his diet, according to Chinese doctors. He spent most of his time in Peking, where he long lived in exile.

Accompanied by his wife, Princess Monique, Prince Sihanouk appeared relaxed and in a warm mood as he exchanged greetings with a long line of Cambodian officials and diplomats, including Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen and the head of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) Yasushi Akashi.

He appeared anxious to move quickly past Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan and only briefly feigned a welcome kiss.

Prince Sihanouk faces a hectic schedule this week, beginning Wednesday when he chairs a meeting of the all-faction national reconciliation body, the Supreme National Council.

On Thursday he will meet Mr. Mitterrand arriving from Vietnam for a whistlestop two-day visit to Cambodia.

It will be the first visit by a French head of state since Charles De Gaulle came here in 1966.

The Phnom Penh government confirmed Tuesday that its army had taken back military supplies held in U.N.-supervised warehouses, a spokesman said.

Asked if any weapons had been taken back, Khieu Kanarith told reporters: "Some yes, in Kandal (province) they (U.N. peacekeepers) gave back. I think more than 100 guns."

He said the Phnom Penh army had written a letter last month to the military commander of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, formally requesting the return of weapons and ammunition.

Bosnians fight on as U.S. mulls peace plan

BELGRADE (R) — Rebel Serbs fought with artillery and small arms against troops of Bosnia's Muslim-led government Tuesday while international mediators waited for the United States to come up with new peace proposals.

Sarajevo Radio in the Bosnian capital said seven people were killed and nine wounded in fighting around Zepa in eastern Bosnia, near the Drina River frontier with neighbouring Serbia.

Two artillery shells slammed into the Muslim Hrasno district of Sarajevo Tuesday morning and Muslim forces returned a single round, the radio said.

Rebel Serb gunners in mountain strongholds above Sarajevo laid siege to the city after Bosnia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in March 1992.

More than 16,000 people have been killed and two million driven from their homes by fighting among Muslims, Serbs and Croats in the Balkan republic in the past 10 months.

Random shelling rocked parts of Sarajevo during the night, with the residential district of Marindvor, close to parliament and the Holiday Inn Hotel, taking several hits.

Three shells landed in the Novo Sarajevo district and it was also raked with sporadic small arms fire. Several shells were fired into the mixed Serb-Muslim Dobrinja district.

At the United Nations in New

York, mediators Cyrus Vance and David Owen briefed the Security Council on their futile efforts so far to bring peace to Bosnia.

Diplomats have said their peace plan, negotiated with the three warring parties since September, had little chance of further progress until the new Clinton administration in Washington announced its own policy on Bosnia, expected soon.

Washington is considering enhanced relief operations, more sanctions against the Serb-led Yugoslav government in Belgrade which supports Bosnian and Croatian Serbs, and changes to a map dividing Bosnia's ethnic groups, the diplomats said.

The Vance-Owen package suffered a setback Monday when Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, whose rebel forces hold 70 per cent of Bosnia, rejected the map accompanying the plan.

He told Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency it must be redrawn. A dispute over the map, carving Bosnia into 10 provinces on ethnic lines, appears to have fuelled a new round of the violent "ethnic cleansing" which has marked the recent Balkan wars.

The United States said it was investigating new reports of the Serbs driving Muslims from towns and villages in the area around Trebinje in the West and along an eastern corridor which links Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia to the Republic of Serbia.

In the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb Radio said Serb rebels shelled the Adriatic coast town of Sibenik Monday evening.

In recent days Sibenik has come under artillery fire from Croatia's rebel Serbs for the first time in several months, a sign that a flare-up in the war in Croatia is spreading.

The radio reported rebel Serb infantry attacks and shelling near Sibenik and the port of Zadar to the north. The Croatian-controlled coastal region is adjacent to the Serb-held enclave of Krajina in the mountainous hinterland.

Units of the Croatian army have successfully repelled all attacks and are in control of the liberated area, the radio said.

The Croatian army launched an offensive in the region near Zadar on Jan. 22, breaking a year-old truce which was being overseen by the United Nations.

The Croats captured a bridge, airport and dam, and tried to push Serb artillery out of range of Croatian coastal towns and ports.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, fresh from a big win in local elections Sunday, said he would not be satisfied until Serb militias in four U.N. protected areas in his country were disbanded and the territory returned to Croatian sovereignty.

Mr. Tudjman's nationalist government has been losing patience with futile U.N. efforts to disarm Serb militias in four enclaves and



A Serbian soldier fires his gun towards Croatian positions in Gorjani Biljani 80 kilometres from Kain the capital of the Serb-held enclave of Krajina (AFP photo)

underlined its discontent by launching the offensive into Krajina. "If the (U.N.) peace forces cannot fulfil their task alone, NATO forces should be behind the peace forces to make sure that the peace plan can be implemented," he told reporters after his party swept to victory in regional elections.

"We will try to incorporate these areas into Croatia's constitutional order without military operations," he said. "But ... we will not tolerate indefinite delays."

He said progress had been made on extending the mandate of the U.N. Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in Croatia, which expires at the end of this month.

But any agreement would depend on firmer guarantees to repatriate tens of thousands of Croats expelled from the Serb

held enclaves, disband Serb paramilitaries and incorporate Serb-populated areas into Croatia proper, he said.

Mr. Tudjman's prime minister, Hrvoje Sarinac, appealed to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali for action to protect Croats living inside and just outside Krajina from counter-attacks by Serb irregulars.

"Croatia is now being subjected to war operations aimed at destroying other members of the Croat people in U.N.-protected areas" in Krajina and its outskirts on the Adriatic coast, Mr. Sarinac wrote in a letter to Dr. Ghali.

He said Krajina's Serb irregular forces as well as regular units of the Serbian-led Yugoslav army had "erased the last traces of the Croatian people in this area, expelled hundreds of people and destroyed their homes and prop-

erty.

Mr. Tudjman's nationalist party emerged Monday with an overwhelming majority in upper house elections, a strong show of support for his offensive against rebel Serbs.

The right-wing Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won 17 of 21 districts in Sunday's elections, contested by 27 parties, and was leading in two more, according to almost complete returns.

It had absolute majorities in eight districts and was heading the same way in three others. Mr. Tudjman scored between 50 and 74 per cent in every region flanking U.N.-monitored zones occupied by extremist Serbs since the January 1992 ceasefire that ended Croatia's war of independence from Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia.

Clinton takes less congested logging route

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton gave commuters relief by taking his jogging en-tourage on a different route, avoiding the city's main traffic arteries. Mr. Clinton was later than usual for his morning run, leaving the White House at 7:30 a.m. (1230 GMT), dangerously close to prime commuting time for the thousands of people who drive into town each day. But his 10-car procession took him to Hains Point, an isolated peninsula that juts into the Potomac River, where he ran three miles (5 kilometres) in 24 minutes. The new jogging path was a welcome change for commuters, many of whom were left tied up in traffic along some of Mr. Clinton's other routes.

Australian sex talk wrecks havoc in Moldova

MOSCOW (R) — Moldovan families were landed with bills amounting to over half a year's wages when their children locked into an Australian telephone sex service offered by a satellite communications network. ITAR-TASS News Agency said schools in Kishinyov, capital of the former Soviet republic, were flooded with leaflets advertising sexually titillating stories narrated in Russian by a young woman. Parents oblivious to the new fashion sweeping town complained to the telephone company when they received bills of over 70,000 roubles (\$120) or about six months average wage. Total charges for the service in January amounted to 2.5 million roubles (\$4,375). TASS quoted Moldova's deputy telecommunications minister, Stepan Musyka, as saying that some parents, on discovering the reason for the astronomical bills, blamed the telephone exchange for failing to warn them of the sex stories and refused to pay.

Free AIDS tests in Japan for Valentine's Day

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese local authority will offer free AIDS tests to young couples as Valentine's Day gifts. The prefectural government in Saitama, near Tokyo, plans to give away tickets to the first 200 couples who ask to be tested for the killer virus which causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). The number of AIDS cases among young Japanese resulting from heterosexual contacts was rising sharply, a spokesman said Tuesday. "We hope the programme will help young people increase their awareness of the disease," he added. Although the programme was aimed at young couples, older couples and homosexuals would not be turned away, the Saitama spokesman said. "If they come, there is no reason why we should refuse." At the end of 1992, Japan's death toll from AIDS stood at 298. At the same point, according to latest government figures, there were 543 patients with AIDS and 2,551 carriers of the HIV virus which causes the deadly disease.

S. Korean police probe exam fraud scandal

SEOUL (R) — South Korean police said they had questioned more than 100 people suspected of being involved in a widening university exam fraud scandal and arrested about 20. "The type of people involved are parents, professors, college officials and even a security agent who is allegedly believed to have played the middle role between parents and the school," a police officer said. "At the moment it's difficult to say exactly how many have been arrested. It's probably more than 20, but more than 100 have been questioned so far," he said. News reports said 31 people had been arrested in connection with illegal admissions conducted by several universities in the state-entrance examination. The case came to light early this month after police found that parents had paid brokers to find university students to sit in and take the exam for their children. Further investigations showed some college officials were involved in changing computer scores, giving some students higher scores than they deserved, while parents were making donations to colleges to admit their children. Police said Kwangwoon University in Seoul had admitted more than 70 students illegally by various means such as accepting cash as "donations".

Angola seeks conscription as battles rage

LUANDA (R) — The Angolan government said Tuesday it wanted conscription to help its hard-pressed troops locked in renewed civil war with UNITA rebels.

State-run media said a draft law for compulsory military service from 20 years of age was drawn up by the cabinet Monday. It would be sent to parliament for approval, possibly later this month.

The key battle is fighting which intensified more than a month ago has been over Huambo, Angola's second city and UNITA's headquarters in the central highlands.

Angolan radio said 39 civilians, 16 of them children, were killed when UNITA resumed shelling the city Monday. UNITA, it said,

lost 40 soldiers "in a vain attempt to take Huambo."

It also reported UNITA attacks on the airports of two provincial capitals, central Kuito and Menongue in the south.

Diplomats believe UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) has the upper hand in the renewed civil war.

Fighting resumed after the movement rejected its defeat by the ruling MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in U.N.-supervised elections last September and expelled local authorities from 75 per cent of the country.

The diplomats say the new Angolan Armed Forces (FAA), formed under the May 1991 peace accords which were to end

16 years of civil war, was in disarray when fighting resumed.

It now numbers about 20,000 men, on addition to the government's police force of perhaps 30,000, of which at least 3,000 are paramilitary riot police.

UNITA has 30,000 to 50,000 mobilised, disciplined troops but may have problems moving supplies across the vast country and could lose a war of attrition, the diplomats say.

UNITA at the weekend sabotaged Luanda's power supplies but electricity has been restored to several neighbourhoods.

The U.N. special representative in Angola, Margaret Anstee, has been working hard to get the two sides to revive the peace accords. But peace talks at the end of January in Addis Ababa

failed to produce a ceasefire.

UNITA said it would not attend a second round, planned for Wednesday, because its negotiating team had not returned to Huambo for consultations. The government rejected this explanation as an excuse to avoid dialogue.

Ms. Anstee said in remarks published Tuesday that she was doing everything she could to organise more talks.

"We will do everything possible so that the two parties return to the negotiating table soon," she said.

She added that she was trying to contact UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. He declared Saturday he would keep fighting until the government offered more concessions.

Yeltsin under pressure to drop referendum

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's powerful regional leaders pressed President Boris Yeltsin Tuesday to back down on plans for a constitutional referendum, expressing fears of an "uncontrollable power struggle" in the country.

A presidential spokesman said Constitutional Court Chairman Valery Zorkin, addressing heads of local republics, proposed suspension of the referendum set for April 11. The spokesman, Vyacheslav Kostikov, hinted that Mr. Yeltsin sought a compromise.

It was the second time in two

months that the constitutionally mandated only last year, had intervened in the political fray in a bid to break deadlock in the country.

Mr. Yeltsin hopes a poll will settle a power-sharing battle with Russia's conservative legislature. But he must have the backing of regional leaders or face a hardline charges that he is risking a breakup of the vast Russian Federation.

The presidential spokesman said many of the 20 Republican leaders had voiced fears the referendum could stir political tensions and undermine economic reforms.

That is why they favoured either postponement of the referendum or introduction of some kind of moratorium on it," Mr. Kostikov said.

"The president and republican leaders have so far failed to agree on any common viewpoint. Their opinions are divided."

Mr. Kostikov said the leaders agreed that "a weakening of the president could lead to an uncontrollable struggle for power."

The republics hold the key to the future of the Russian Federation. One, Chechnya in the Caucasus, has already declared outright independence and another, Tatarstan on the Volga, has de-

clared sovereignty and adopted its own constitution — a similar pattern to that seen in the early days of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Kostikov said the president had not made up his mind on what to do about the referendum, which Mr. Yeltsin's chief rival, parliamentary chief Russian Khasbulatov, insists can only damage Russia.

"I do not exclude that a search for some kind of compromise will be made," Mr. Kostikov said. "This would be some kind of constitutional convention which would divide up powers."

Anti-abortion forces contend the measure also is out of step with the views of the majority of Americans. For example, polls show that many Americans, while they support keeping abortion legal, favour curbs such as 24 hour waiting periods.

That is why some abortion rights supporters, including Pope Schuster, think there needs to be compromise. Refusing to bargain means sure death for the bill, these lawmakers say.

In a separate development, a panel of U.S. experts urged President Clinton Monday not to carry out his campaign pledge to penalise China over political repression in that country.

The panel said in a report that the trade benefits China has under most favoured nations status "should not be withdrawn or further conditioned," and that human rights issues should be handled in a "vigorous and quiet dialogue" at senior levels.

Sanctions should be ordered against China only after cooperation fails and after specific violations of U.S. trade law or agreements, it said.

The panel urged expansion of broadcasts to China by the Voice of America, noting that it has a reputation for objectivity. It urged against launching a "Radio Free Asia" broadcast service at China on grounds that "would be perceived as treating China as an 'enemy state' and thereby reinforce repressive and xenophobic tendencies in Peking."

Another key recommendation was for vigorous efforts to sell more and reduce the U.S. trade deficit with China, which rose to \$19 billion last year from \$3 billion in 1988.

Clinton creates new office on environment

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton has abolished an advisory body on the environment and replaced it with a policy-making body as an interim step to elevating the Environmental Protection Agency to cabinet status.

"We must move in a new direction, to recognise that protecting the environment means strengthening the economy, and creating new jobs for Americans," he said.

Using a White House ceremony to dramatise his campaign promise to overhaul environmental policies after 12 years of Republican control of the White House, Mr. Clinton declared that "we are today changing the way government works."

In a slap at the environmental commitment of former President George Bush, who dubbed himself the "environment president" but was often criticised by ecological activists, Mr. Clinton proclaimed that "the days of photo-op environmentalism are over."

"We face urgent environmental and economic challenges that demand a new way of thinking, and a new way of organising our efforts here in the White House and in the national government," Mr. Clinton said.

Vice President Al Gore, the former Tennessee senator who has written a best-selling book on the environment, said the new office "will be the place where policy on the environment is coordinated."

It's a reorganisation that makes sense," said Mr. Gore, who clashed sharply with Mr. Bush last year when the United States watered down a global treaty on air pollution at the U.N. Earth Summit in Brazil.

Mr. Clinton abolished the Council on Environmental Quality — an advisory body — and replaced it with the White House Office on Environmental Policy, charged with setting policy.

He also pledged to push Congress to elevate the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to a department with full cabinet status.

Mr. Clinton also took a swipe at the Bush policy on easing business competition, saying: "The competitiveness council is closed and so is the back door the polluters used to use to get out from under our laws."

The Competitive Council, headed by former Vice President Dan Quayle, was intended to promote economic growth by easing red tape on business competition. Critics alleged it trampled environmental protection rules in the process.

The new White House office will be headed by Kathleen McGinty, a 29-year-old lawyer who has served as Mr. Gore's senior environmental policy adviser since 1990.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said Monday that his foremost goal is to protect the country's diversity of plant and animal life through the Endangered Species Act.

In a speech to the American Mining Congress, Mr. Babbitt said the law — frequently a target of industry — "is soundly premised by the notion that it is very important that we maintain the biodiversity that supports the lifeways of the planet, the lifeways of the water, and the land resources and productivity of this country."

He added that "however controversial and sometimes illogical

it may seem in specific applications, the law's general concept has enormous support and ought to have enormous support because the issue of preserving the biodiversity and land and habitat base in this country is an important item."

Meanwhile, even with a new friend in the White House, many abortion rights supporters concede they will have to make concessions to win passage of a bill putting such rights into law. But they have yet to agree on what and how much to give.

"There's a division in the ranks," says Rep. Charles Schumer, co-sponsor of the proposed Freedom of Choice Act. His view: "five-sixths of a loaf is better than none."

Rep. Don Edwards, the bill's chief House sponsor, says, "we're not going to go out there and weaken Roe (versus Wade — the supreme court decision that made abortion legal). We would rather postpone it until we have the votes."

The idea is to put the provisions of Roe vs. Wade into federal law, protecting against the possibility that the Supreme Court will decide to reverse its 1973 ruling.

The act would also create some national standards for limitations that states could put on abortion. That is where the potential showdown lies. The federal proposal would outlaw some restrictions in some states — such as 24 hour waiting periods and parental consent requirements.

"This bill goes way beyond Roe — it goes to a wide open, no-holds-barred, abortion on demand," said Sen. Orrin Hatch. "It flies in the face of at least what 80 per cent of Congress

thinks."

Anti-abortion forces contend the measure also is out of step with the views of the majority of Americans. For example, polls show that many Americans, while they support keeping abortion legal, favour curbs such as 24 hour waiting periods.

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